



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

262 .H784EA

C.2

The laws of ecclesiast

Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 046 801 044



STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

THE LAWS
OF
ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

BOOKS I.—IV.

BY

RICHARD HOOKER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY

LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
GLASGOW AND NEW YORK

1888

MORLEY'S UNIVERSAL LIBRARY.

1. *Sheridan's Plays.*
2. *Plays from Molière.* By English Dramatists.
3. *Marlowe's Faustus* and *Goethe's Faust.*
4. *Chronicle of the Cid.*
5. *Rabelais' Gargantua and the Heroic Deeds of Pantagruel.*
6. *Machiavelli's Prince.*
7. *Bacon's Essays.*
8. *Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year.*
9. *Locke on Civil Government* and *Filmer's "Patriarcha."*
10. *Butler's Analogy of Religion.*
11. *Dryden's Virgil.*
12. *Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft.*
13. *Herrick's Hesperides.*
14. *Coleridge's Table-Talk.*
15. *Boccaccio's Decameron.*
16. *Sterne's Tristram Shandy.*
17. *Chapman's Homer's Iliad.*
18. *Medieval Tales.*
19. *Voltaire's Candide,* and *Johnson's Rasselas.*
20. *Jonson's Plays and Poems.*
21. *Hobbes's Leviathan.*
22. *Samuel Butler's Hudibras.*
23. *Ideal Commonwealths.*
24. *Cavendish's Life of Wolsey.*
- 25 & 26. *Don Quixote.*
27. *Burlesque Plays and Poems.*
28. *Dante's Divine Comedy.* LONGFELLOW'S Translation.
29. *Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, Plays, and Poems.*
30. *Fables and Proverbs from the Sanskrit. (Hitopadesa.)*
31. *Lamb's Essays of Elia.*
32. *The History of Thomas Ellwood.*
33. *Emerson's Essays, &c.*
34. *Southey's Life of Nelson.*
35. *De Quincey's Confessions of an Opium-Eater, &c.*
36. *Stories of Ireland.* By Miss EDGEWORTH.
37. *Frere's Aristophanes: Acharnians, Knights, Birds.*
38. *Burke's Speeches and Letters.*
39. *Thomas à Kempis.*
40. *Popular Songs of Ireland.*
41. *Potter's Æschylus.*
42. *Goethe's Faust: Part II.* ANSTER'S Translation.
43. *Famous Pamphlets.*
44. *Franklin's Sophocles.*
45. *M. G. Lewis's Tales of Terror and Wonder.*
46. *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.*
47. *Drayton's Barons' Wars, Nymphidia, &c.*
48. *Cobbett's Advice to Young Men.*
49. *The Banquet of Dante.*
50. *Walker's Original.*
51. *Schiller's Poems and Ballads.*
52. *Peele's Plays and Poems.*
53. *Harrington's Oceana.*
54. *Euripides: Alcestis and other Plays.*
55. *Praed's Essays.*
56. *Traditional Tales.* ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.
57. *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity. Books I.-IV.*

"Marvels of clear type and general neatness."—*Daily Telegraph.*



a 60688

INTRODUCTION.

RICHARD HOOKER was born at Heavitree, now a suburb of Exeter, about the year 1553. His parents were poor, but he had an Uncle John, who was Chamberlain of Exeter, a man fairly well-to-do, who cared about his nephew. The nephew was to have been apprenticed to a trade, but his schoolmaster spoke with enthusiasm of the thoughtful spirit of study that lay hidden in this pupil under a slow manner, of the clear mind in the half-sickly body, and urged that he should have at least a year of college work for further trial of his worth. Uncle John turned for advice to John Jewel, another Devonshire man, who was then Bishop of Salisbury. Jewel saw the schoolmaster, and saw the boy, and saw that the judgment of the schoolmaster was right. He helped John Hooker to send his nephew, at the age of fifteen, to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, watched his progress, and became enthusiastic in praise of his quiet piety, and the steadiness with which he made his way good as a scholar. Jewel's praise of the youth to Edwin Sandys, Bishop of London, caused Sandys to send his son to Oxford instead of to Cambridge, which had been his own University, that he might have guidance from Hooker as a companion and tutor. Other pupils also sought him, and regarded him with strong affection. He took his degree of M.A. in 1577, and obtained a Fellowship at his College.

Jewel had died in 1571, but Richard Hooker had earned for himself friends who would not suffer his studies to

be interrupted. Two years after his graduation as M.A. Hooker was appointed, in 1579, to read the public Hebrew lecture in the University. In 1581 he was ordained priest, and soon afterwards the Bishop of London showed respect for him by naming him for preacher of one of the open-air sermons at Paul's Cross. Hooker had intended to walk in from Oxford to London, but had been advised that the preacher at Paul's Cross must ride for dignity of the cloth. He seldom rode, and suffered the more for rain upon his journey. He was delicate of health and shy, had the down look of the student, and rarely, good man as he was, looked anybody straight in the eyes; his stature was small, and his face pimply. When he alighted at the "Shunamite's House," provided as a lodging for the preachers from the country, Mrs. Churchman, who had charge of it, put him to bed, and made him very comfortable. He felt so much better in the morning, that she expatiated on the need there was of a good woman to look after the good man. He agreed, and asked her to let him know if she should meet with such a woman as she could recommend him for a wife. She recommended her own daughter Joan, who in due time accordingly became Mrs. Hooker. She survived him and married again, very soon after his death. Four months after Hooker's death, she was found dead in her bed, and her second husband was unjustly suspected of having poisoned her.

Hooker's marriage drew him out of Oxford, and he was presented to a small living at Drayton Beauchamp, near Aylesbury. A visit from the son of Edwin Sandys, then become Archbishop of York, and from George Cranmer, another old pupil, led to such report of the insufficiency of the provision for so learned and good a man, that Sandys resolved to use his influence on Hooker's behalf, and in March 1585, Richard Hooker was appointed Master of the Temple. It was this appointment that led to the writing of his "Ecclesiastical Polity."

[The Church of England was divided in opinion upon questions of Church government. The whole controversy was within the Church and was continuation of the forms of argument that had been familiar in Wyclif's time. Those who were called the Puritans desired a church establishment retaining nothing from the ceremonial of Rome that was not based upon the clear authority of Scripture, and they would frame a constitution for the Church as nearly as might be upon the model of the Church of the Apostles. As Master of the Temple, Hooker found the greater number of the Templars to be inclined rather to this view than to his own. He was himself persuaded that the English Church as established by Elizabeth, with Matthew Parker's aid, was furnished with a Polity wisely devised to meet the actual conditions of the time, and fit therefore to maintain the spirit of religion. The Templars had right of election in appointment of evening lecturer, and had appointed Walter Travers, one of the ablest and most pious leaders on the side to which they were themselves inclined. The result was discord.] "The forenoon sermon," it was said, "spake Canterbury, and the afternoon Geneva." Hooker, set in the midst of this dissension, thought over his own views the more earnestly; but the discords pained him, and at last he wrote a letter to Archbishop Whitgift, asking to be relieved of his office and restored to quiet, that he might faithfully work out this argument. [My lord," he said, "my particular contests with Mr. Travers here have proved the more unpleasant to me, because I believe him to be a good man, and that belief hath occasioned me to examine mine own conscience concerning his opinions. . . . And on this examination I have not only satisfied myself, but have begun a treatise in which I intend a justification of the Laws of our Ecclesiastical Polity] in which design God and His holy angels shall at the last great day bear me that witness which my conscience now does, that my meaning is not to provoke any, but rather to satisfy all tender consciences; and I shall never be able to do this but where I may study and pray for

God's blessing on my endeavours, and keep myself in peace and privacy, and behold God's blessing spring out of my mother earth, and eat my own bread without oppositions; and, therefore, if your grace can judge me worthy of such a favour, let me beg it, that I may perfect what I have begun."

Hooker's wish was granted. In 1591 he resigned his office in the Temple for the small living of Boscombe, about six miles from Salisbury, of which the little income was slightly increased by a prebend in Salisbury Cathedral. At Boscombe, Richard Hooker lived from 1591 to 1595. It was there that he had completed, in March 1593, the four books of "Ecclesiastical Polity" which are here reprinted, and which were first published by him in 1594.

In 1595 Hooker was transferred from Boscombe in Wiltshire, to Bishopsbourne, three miles from Canterbury, where he spent his few remaining years. The fifth book of the "Ecclesiastical Polity" was published in 1597, and Hooker died in 1600. The remaining three books of unrevised matter were collected from his papers, and published eighteen years after his death; but there is doubt how far they are to be regarded as the books he would himself have published had he lived.

H. M.

December 1887.

FOUR BOOKS
OF
ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

A PREFACE

TO THEM THAT SEEK (AS THEY TERM IT) THE REFORMATION
OF LAWS AND ORDERS ECCLESIASTICAL IN THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THOUGH for no other cause, yet for this—that posterity may know we have not loosely, through silence, permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be for men's information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavour which would have upheld the same. At your hands, beloved in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (for in Him the love which we bear unto all that would but seem to be born of Him, it is not the sea of your gall and bitterness that shall ever drown), I have no great cause to look for other than the selfsame portion and lot which your manner hath been hitherto to lay on them that concur not in opinion and sentence with you. But our hope is that the God of peace shall (notwithstanding man's nature, too impatient of contumelious malediction) enable us quietly, and even gladly, to suffer all things for that work's sake which we covet to perform. The wonderful zeal and fervour wherewith ye have withstood the received orders of this Church, was the first thing which caused me to enter into consideration whether (as all your published books and writings peremptorily maintain) every Christian man fearing God stand bound to join with you for the furtherance of that which ye

term the Lord's discipline ; wherein I must plainly confess unto you, that before I examined your sundry declarations in that behalf, it could not settle in my head to think but that undoubtedly such numbers of otherwise right well affected and most religiously inclined minds had some marvellous reasonable inducements which led them with so great earnestness that way. But when once, as near as my slender ability would serve, I had with travail and care performed that part of the Apostle's advice and counsel in such cases, whereby he willeth to try all things, and was come at the length so far that there remained only the other clause to be satisfied, wherein he concludeth that what good is must be held, there was in my poor understanding no remedy but to set down this as my final resolute persuasion. Surely the present form of Church government which the laws of this land have established is such as no law of God nor reason of man hath hitherto been alleged of force sufficient to prove they do ill who to the uttermost of their power withstand the alteration thereof. Contrariwise, the other, which instead of it we are required to accept, is only by error and misconceit named the ordinance of Jesus Christ, no one proof as yet brought forth whereby it may clearly appear to be so in very deed. The explication of which two things I have here thought good to offer into your own hands, heartily beseeching you, even by the meekness of Jesus Christ, whom I trust ye love, that, as ye tender the peace and quietness of this Church, if there be in you that gracious humility which hath ever been the crown and glory of a Christianly disposed mind, if your own souls, hearts, and consciences (the sound integrity whereof can but hardly stand with the refusal of truth in personal respects) be, as I doubt not but they are, things most dear and precious unto you : Let not the faith which ye have in our Lord Jesus Christ be blemished with partialities ; regard not who it is which speaketh, but weigh only what is spoken. Think not that ye read the words of one who bendeth himself as an adversary against the truth which ye have already embraced, but the words of one who desireth even to embrace together with you the selfsame truth, if it be the truth, and for that cause (for no other, God he knoweth) hath undertaken the burdensome labour of this painful kind of conference. For the plainer access whereunto, let it be lawful for me to rip up to the very

bottom how and by whom your discipline was planted, at such time as this age we live in began to make first trial thereof.

2. A founder it had, whom, for mine own part, I think incomparably the wisest man that ever the French Church did enjoy, since the hour it enjoyed him. His bringing up was in the study of the civil law. Divine knowledge he gathered not by hearing or reading so much as by teaching others. For though thousands were debtors to him, as touching knowledge in that kind; yet he to none but only to God, the author of that most blessed fountain the Book of Life, and of the admirable dexterity of wit, together with the helps of other learning which were his guides, till being occasioned to leave France, he fell at length upon Geneva, which city the bishop and clergy thereof had a little before (as some do affirm) forsaken, being of likelihood frightened with the people's sudden attempt for abolishment of Popish religion, the event of which enterprise they thought it not safe for themselves to wait for in that place. At the coming of Calvin thither, the form of their civil regiment was popular, as it continueth at this day, neither king, nor duke, nor nobleman of any authority or power over them, but officers chosen by the people yearly out of themselves, to order all things with public consent. For spiritual government, they had no laws at all agreed upon, but did what the pastors of their souls by persuasion could win them unto. Calvin being admitted one of their preachers and a divinity reader amongst them, considered how dangerous it was that the whole estate of that Church should hang still on so slender a thread as the liking of an ignorant multitude is, if it have power to change whatsoever itself listeth. Wherefore taking unto him two of the other ministers for more countenance of the action (albeit the rest were all against it), they moved, and in the end persuaded with much ado, the people to bind themselves by solemn oath, first never to admit the papacy amongst them again, and secondly, to live in obedience unto such orders concerning the exercise of their religion, and the form of their ecclesiastical government, as those their true and faithful ministers of God's word had agreeably to Scripture set down for that end and purpose. When these things began to be put in use, the people also (what causes moving them thereunto themselves best know) began to repent them of

that they had done, and irefully to champ upon the bit they had taken into their mouths, the rather for that they grew by means of this innovation into dislike with some churches near about them, the benefit of whose good friendship their state could not well lack. It was the manner of those times (whether through men's desire to enjoy alone the glory of their own enterprises, or else because the quickness of their occasions required present despatch), so it was, that every particular church did that within itself which some few of their own thought good, by whom the rest were all directed. Such number of churches then being, though free within themselves, yet small, common conference beforehand might have eased them of much after-trouble. But a greater inconvenience it bred, that every later endeavoured to be certain degrees more removed from conformity with the Church of Rome than the rest before had been: whereupon grew marvellous great dissimilitudes, and by reason thereof jeakousies, heartburnings, jars, and discords amongst them. Which notwithstanding might have easily been prevented, if the orders which each church did think fit and convenient for itself had not so peremptorily been established under that high commanding form, which tendered them unto the people as things everlastingly required by the law of that Lord of lords, against whose statutes there is no exception to be taken. For by this mean it came to pass that one church could not but accuse and condemn another of disobedience to the will of Christ in those things where manifest difference was between them, whereas the selfsame orders allowed, but yet established in more wary and suspense manner, as being to stand in force till God should give the opportunity of some general conference what might be best for every of them afterwards to do; this I say had both prevented all occasion of just dislike which others might take, and reserved a greater liberty unto the authors themselves of entering into further consultation afterwards, which though never so necessary they could not easily now admit without some fear of derogation from their credit, and, therefore, that which once they had done they became for ever after resolute to maintain: Calvin, therefore, and the other two, his associates, stiffly refusing to administer the holy communion to such as would not quietly without contradiction and murmur submit themselves unto the orders which their solemn oath had

bound them to obey, were in that quarrel banished the town. A few years after (such was the levity of that people) the places of one or two of their ministers being fallen void, they were not before so willing to be rid of their learned pastor, as now importunate to obtain him again from them who had given him entertainment, and which were loath to part with him, had not irresistible earnestness been used. One of the town ministers that saw in what manner the people were bent for the revocation of Calvin, gave him notice of their affection in this sort. "The Senate of two hundred being assembled, they all crave Calvin. The next day a general convocation. They cry in like sort again, all: We will have Calvin that good and learned man Christ's minister. This, saith he, when I understood I could not choose but praise God, nor was I able to judge otherwise, than that this was the Lord's doing, and that it was marvellous in our eyes, and that the stone which the builders refused was now made the head of the corner!" The other two whom they had thrown out (together with Calvin) they were content should enjoy their exile. Many causes might lead them to be more desirous of him. First, his yielding unto them in one thing, might haply put them in hope, that time would breed the like easiness of condescending further unto them; for, in his absence, he had persuaded them, with whom he was able to prevail, that albeit himself did better like of common bread to be used in the Eucharist, yet the other they rather should accept than cause any trouble in the Church about it. Again, they saw that the name of Calvin waxed every day greater abroad, and that together with his fame their infamy was spread, who had so rashly and childishly ejected him. Besides, it was not unlikely but that his credit in the world might many ways stand the poor town in great stead: as the truth is, their minister's foreign estimation hitherto hath been the best stake in their hedge. But, whatsoever secret respects were likely to move them, for contenting of their minds, Calvin returned (as it had been another Tully) to his old home. He ripely considered how gross a thing it were for men of his quality, wise and grave men, to live with such a multitude, and to be tenants at will under them, as their ministers, both himself and others, had been. For the remedy of which inconvenience, he gave them plainly to understand, that if he did become their teacher again,

they must be content to admit a complete form of discipline, which both they and also their pastors should now be solemnly sworn to observe for ever after. Of which discipline the main and principal parts were these:—A standing Ecclesiastical Court to be established; perpetual judges in that Court to be their ministers; others of the people annually chosen (twice so many in number as they) to be judges together with them in the same Court; these two sorts to have the care of all men's manners, powers of determining of all kind of ecclesiastical causes, and authority to convent, to control, to punish, as far as with excommunication, whomsoever they should think worthy, none either small or great excepted. This device I see not how the wisest at that time living could have bettered, if we duly consider what the present estate of Geneva did then require. For their bishop and his clergy being (as it is said) departed from them by moonlight, or, howsoever, being departed; to choose in his room any other bishop had been a thing altogether impossible. And for their ministers to seek that themselves alone might have coercive power over the whole Church, would perhaps have been hardly construed at that time; but when so frank an offer was made, that for every one minister there should be two of the people to sit and give voice in the Ecclesiastical Consistory, what inconvenience could they easily find which themselves might not be able always to remedy? Howbeit (as evermore the simpler sort are, even when they see no apparent cause, jealous notwithstanding over the secret intents and purposes of wiser men) this proposition of his did somewhat trouble them. Of the ministers themselves which had stayed behind in the city when Calvin was gone, some, upon knowledge of the people's earnest intent to recall him to his place again, had beforehand written their letters of submission, and assured him of their allegiance for ever after, if it should like him to hearken unto that public suit. But yet misdoubting what might happen, if this discipline did go forward, they objected against it the example of other reformed Churches living quietly and orderly without it. Some of the chiefest place and countenance amongst the laity professed with greater stomach their judgments, that such a discipline was little better than Popish tyranny disguised and tendered unto them under a new form. This sort, it may be, had some fear that the filling-up of the seats in the Consistory with so

great a number of laymen, was but to please the minds of the people, to the end they might think their own sway somewhat; but when things came to trial of practice, their pastors' learning would be at all times of force to overpersuade simple men, who knowing the time of their own presidentship to be but short, would always stand in fear of their minister's perpetual authority. And among the ministers themselves, one being so far in estimation above the rest, the voices of the rest were likely to be given for the most part respectively with a kind of secret dependency and awe; so that in show a marvellous indifferently composed Senate Ecclesiastical was to govern, but in effect one only man should, as the spirit and soul of the residue, do all in all. But what did these vain surmises boot? Brought they were now to so straight an issue, that of two things they must choose one—namely, whether they would to their endless disgrace, with ridiculous lightness, dismiss him whose restitution they had in so impotent manner desired; or else condescend unto that demand, wherein he was resolute either to have it, or to leave them. They thought it better to be somewhat hardly yoked at home, than for ever abroad discredited. Wherefore in the end those orders were on all sides assented unto, with no less alacrity of mind, than cities unable to hold out longer are wont to show, when they take conditions such as it liketh him to offer them which hath them in the narrow straits of advantage. Not many years were overpassed, before these twice-sworn men adventured to give their last and hottest assault to the fortress of the same discipline, childishly granting by common consent of their whole senate, and that under their town seal, a relaxation to one Bertelier whom the eldership had excommunicated; further also decreeing, with strange absurdity, that to the same senate it should belong to give final judgment in matter of excommunication, and to absolve whom it pleased them; clean contrary to their own former deeds and oaths. The report of which decree being forthwith brought unto Calvin; "Before (saith he) this decree take place, either my blood or banishment shall sign it." Again two days before the communion should be celebrated, this speech was publicly to like effect. "Kill me if ever this hand do reach forth the things that are holy, to them whom the Church hath judged despisers." Whereupon, for fear of tumult, the forenamed

Bertelier was by his friends advised for that time not to use the liberty granted him by the senate, nor to present himself in the Church, till they saw somewhat further what would ensue. After the communion quietly ministered, and some likelihood of peaceable ending of these troubles without any more ado, that very day in the afternoon, besides all men's expectation, concluding his ordinary sermon, he telleth them, that because he neither had learned nor taught to strive with such as are in authority, therefore (saith he) "the case so standing as now it doth, let me use these words of the Apostle unto you, I commend you unto God and the word of His grace," and so bade them heartily adieu. It sometimes cometh to pass, that the readiest way which a wise man hath to conquer, is to fly. This voluntary and unexpected mention of sudden departure, caused presently the senate (for according to their wonted manner they still continued only constant in unconstancy) to gather themselves together, and for a time to suspend their own decree, leaving things to proceed as before, till they had heard the judgment of four Helvetian cities concerning the matter which was in strife. This to have done at the first before they gave assent unto any order, had showed some wit and discretion in them: but now to do it, was as much as to say in effect, that they would play their parts on a stage. Calvin therefore despatcheth with all expedition his letters unto some principal pastor in every of those cities, craving earnestly at their hands, to respect this cause as a thing whereupon the whole state of religion and piety in that Church did so much depend, that God and all good men were now inevitably certain to be trampled under foot, unless those four cities by their good means might be brought to give sentence with the ministers of Geneva, when the cause should be brought before them: yea so to give it, that two things it might effectually contain; the one an absolute approbation of the discipline of Geneva, as consonant unto the Word of God, without any cautions, qualifications, ifs or ands; the other an earnest admonition not to innovate or change the same. His vehement request herein as touching both points was satisfied. For albeit the said Helvetian Churches did never as yet observe that discipline, nevertheless the Senate of Geneva having required their judgment concerning these three questions: First, after what manner, by God's commandment, according to the Scripture and unspotted religion

excommunication is to be exercised ; Secondly, whether it may not be exercised some other way than by the Consistory ; Thirdly, what the use of their Churches was, to do in this case : answer was returned from the said Churches, that they had heard already of those consistorial laws, and did acknowledge them to be godly ordinances drawing towards the prescript of the Word of God ; for which cause that they did not think it good for the Church of Geneva by innovation to change the same, but rather to keep them as they were. Which answer, although not answering unto the former demands, but respecting what Master Calvin had judged requisite for them to answer, was notwithstanding accepted without any further reply : inasmuch as they plainly saw, that when stomach doth strive with wit, the match is not equal. And so the heat of their former contentions began to slake. The present inhabitants of Geneva, I hope, will not take it in evil part, that the faultiness of their people heretofore, is by us so far forth laid open, as their own learned guides and pastors have thought necessary to discover it unto the world. For out of their books and writings it is that I have collected this whole narration, to the end it might thereby appear in what sort amongst them that discipline was planted, for which so much contention is raised amongst ourselves. The reasons which moved Calvin herein to be so earnest, was, as Beza himself testifieth, “ for that he saw how needful these bridles were to be put in the jaws of that city.” That which by wisdom he saw to be requisite for that people, was by as great wisdom compassed. (But wise men are men, and the truth is truth.) That which Calvin did for establishment of his discipline, seemeth more commendable, than that which he taught for the countenancing of it established. (Nature worketh in us all a love to our own counsels.) The contradiction of others is a fan to inflame that love. Our love set on fire to maintain that which once we have done, sharpeneth the wit to dispute, to argue, and by all means to reason for it. Wherefore a marvel it were if a man of so great capacity, having such incitements to make him desirous of all kinds of furtherances unto his cause, could espy in the whole Scripture of God nothing which might breed at the least a probable opinion of likelihood, that divine authority itself was the same way somewhat inclinable. And all which the wit even of Calvin was able from thence to draw, by

sifting the very utmost sentence and syllable, is no more than that certain speeches there are which to him did seem to intimate that all Christian Churches ought to have their elderships endued with power of excommunication, and that a part of those elderships everywhere should be chosen out from amongst the laity after that form which himself had framed Geneva unto. But what argument are ye able to show, whereby it was ever proved by Calvin, that any one sentence of Scripture doth necessarily enforce these things, or the rest wherein your opinion concurrith with his against the orders of your own Church? We should be injurious unto virtue itself if we did derogate from them whom their industry hath made great. Two things of principal moment there are which have deservedly procured him honour throughout the world. The one, his exceeding pains in composing the "*Institutions of Christian Religion*"; the other, his no less industrious travails for exposition of Holy Scripture according unto the same Institutions; in which two things, whosoever they were that after him bestowed their labour, he gained the advantage of prejudice against them if they gainsaid, and of glory above them if they consented. His writings, published after the question about that discipline was once begun, omit not any the least occasion of extolling the use and singular necessity thereof. Of what account the master of sentences was in the Church of Rome, the same and more amongst the preachers of Reformed Churches Calvin had purchased, so that the perfectest divines were judged they which were skilfullest in Calvin's writings. His books were almost the very canon to judge both doctrine and discipline by. French churches, both under others abroad and at home in their own country, all cast according unto that mould which Calvin had made. The Church of Scotland, in erecting the fabric of their reformation, took the selfsame pattern, till, at length, the discipline, which was at the first so weak, that without the staff of their approbation who were not subject unto it themselves, it had not brought others under subjection, began now to challenge universal obedience and to enter into open conflict with those very Churches which, in desperate extremity, had been relievers of it. To one of those Churches which lived in most peaceable sort, and abounded as well with men for their learning in other professions singular, as also with divines whose equals were

not elsewhere to be found, a Church ordered by Gualter's discipline, and not by that which Geneva adareth. ~~Unto~~ ^{unto} this Church—the Church of Heidelberg—there cometh one who, craving leave to dispute publicly, defendeth, with open disdain of their government, that “To a minister with his eldership power is given by the law of God to excommunicate whomsoever, yea, even kings and princes themselves.” Here were the seeds sown of that controversy which sprang up between Beza and Erastus about the matter of excommunication: whether there ought to be in all Churches an eldership having power to excommunicate, and a part of that eldership to be of necessity certain chosen out from amongst the laity for that purpose. In which disputation they have, as to me it seemeth, divided very equally the truth between them; Beza most truly maintaining the necessity of excommunication; Erastus as truly the non-necessity of lay elders to be ministers thereof. Amongst ourselves, there was, in King Edward's days, some question moved by reason of a few men's scrupulosity touching certain things. And beyond seas, of them which fled in the days of Queen Mary, some contenting themselves abroad with the use of their own service-book at home, authorized before their departure out of the realm; others liking better the common Prayer-book of the Church of Geneva translated, those smaller contentions before begun were, by this means, somewhat increased. Under the happy reign of Her Majesty which now is, the greatest matter awhile contended for was the wearing of the cap and surplice, till there came admonitions directed unto the High Court of Parliament, by men who, concealing their names, thought it glory enough to discover their minds and affections, which now were universally bent even against all the orders and laws wherein this Church is found unconformable to the platform of Geneva. Concerning the defender of which admonitions, all that I mean to say is but this, There will come a time when three words uttered with charity and meekness, shall receive a far more blessed reward than three thousand volumes written with disdainful sharpness of wit. But the manner of men's writing must not alienate our hearts from the truth, if it appear they have the truth, as the followers of the same defender doth think he hath, and in that persuasion they follow him, no otherwise than himself doth Calvin, Beza, and others, with the like per-

suation that they in this cause had the truth. We being as fully persuaded otherwise, it resteth that some kind of trial be used to find out which part is in error.

3 The first mean whereby nature teacheth men to judge good from evil as well in laws as in other things, is the force of their own discretion. Hereunto, therefore, St. Paul referreth oftentimes his own speech to be considered of by them that heard him, "I speak as to them which have understanding; judge ye what I say." Again, afterward, "Judge in yourselves, is it comely that a woman pray uncovered?" The exercise of this kind of judgment our Saviour requireth in the Jews. (In them of Berea the Scripture commendeth it. Finally, whatsoever we do, if our own secret judgment consent not unto it as fit and good to be done, the doing of it to us is sin, although the thing itself be allowable.) St. Paul's rule, therefore, generally is, "(Let every man in his own mind be fully persuaded of that thing which he either alloweth or doth.)" Some things are so familiar and plain, that truth from falsehood, and good from evil, is most easily discerned in them, even by men of no deep capacity. And of that nature, for the most part, are things absolutely unto all men's salvation necessary, either to be held or denied, either to be done or avoided. For which cause St. Augustine acknowledgeth that they are not only set down, but also plainly set down in Scripture, so that he which heareth or readeth may, without any great difficulty, understand. Other things also there are belonging (though in a lower degree of importance) unto the offices of Christian men, which, because they are more obscure, more intricate, and hard to be judged of, therefore God hath appointed some to spend their whole time principally in the study of things divine, to the end that in these more doubtful cases, their understanding might be a light to direct others. "If the understanding power or faculty of the soul be," saith the grand physician, "like unto bodily sight, not of equal sharpness in all, what can be more convenient than that, even as the dark-sighted man is directed by the clear about things visible, so likewise in matters of deeper discourse the wise in heart do show the simple where his way lieth." In our doubtful cases of law, what man is there who seeth not how requisite it is that professors of skill in that faculty be our directors? So it is in all other kinds of knowledge. And even in this kind likewise the Lord hath Himself ap-

pointed that, "the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and that other men should seek the truth at his mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." Gregory Nazianzen, offended at the people's too great presumption in controlling the judgment of them to whom in such cases they should have rather submitted their own, seeketh by earnest entreaty to stay them within their bounds : "Presume not, ye that are sheep, to make yourselves guides of them that should guide you, neither seek ye to overskip the fold which they about you have pitched. It sufficeth for your part, if ye can well frame yourselves to be ordered. Take not upon you to judge yourselves, nor to make them subject to your laws who should be a law to you. For God is not a God of sedition and confusion, but of order and of peace." But ye will say, that if the guides of the people be blind, the common sort of men must not close up their own eyes and be led by the conduct of such ; if the priest be partial in the law, the flock must not therefore depart from the ways of sincere truth, and in simplicity yield to be followers of him for his place sake and office over them. Which thing, though in itself most true, is in your defence, notwithstanding, weak, because the matter, wherein ye think that ye see and imagine that your ways are sincere, is of far deeper consideration than any one amongst five hundred of you conceiveth. Let the vulgar sort amongst you know that there is not the least branch of the cause wherein they are so resolute, but to the trial of it a great deal more appertaineth than their conceit doth reach unto. I write not this in disgrace of the simplest that way given, but I would gladly they knew the nature of that cause wherein they think themselves thoroughly instructed and are not, by means whereof they daily run themselves, without feeling their own hazard, upon the dint of the Apostle's sentence against evil speakers as touching things wherein they are ignorant. If it be granted a thing unlawful for private men, not called unto public consultation, to dispute which is the best state of civil policy (with a desire of bringing in some other kind than that under which they already live, for of such disputes I take it his meaning was), if it be a thing confessed that of such questions they cannot determine without rashness, inasmuch as a great part of them consisteth in special circumstances, and for one kind as many reasons may be brought as for another ; is there any reason in the world why they

should better judge what kind of regiment ecclesiastical is the fittest? For, in the civil state more insight, and in those affairs more experience a great deal must needs be granted them than in this they can possibly have. When they which write in defence of your discipline, and commend it unto the Highest, not in the least cunning manner, are forced, notwithstanding, to acknowledge that, "with whom the truth is they know not," they are not certain; what certainty or knowledge can the multitude have thereof? Weigh what doth move the common sort so much to favour this innovation, and it shall soon appear unto you that the force of particular reasons which for your several opinions are alleged, is a thing whereof the multitude never did, nor could, so consider as to be therewith wholly carried; but certain general inducements are used to make saleable your cause in gross; and, when once men have cast a fancy towards it, any slight declaration of specialties will serve to lead forward men's inclinable and prepared minds. The method of winning the people's affection unto a general liking of the cause (for so ye term it) hath been this: First, in the hearing of the multitude, the faults especially of higher callings are ripped up with marvellous exceeding severity and sharpness of reproof, which, being oftentimes done, begetteth a great good opinion of integrity, zeal and holiness to such constant reprovers of sin as by likelihood would never be so much offended at that which is evil unless themselves were singularly good. The next thing hereunto is to impute all faults and corruptions wherewith the world aboundeth unto the kind of ecclesiastical government established, wherein as before, by reproving faults, they purchased unto themselves with the multitude a name to be virtuous; so by finding out this kind of cause they obtain to be judged wise above others, whereas in truth, unto the form even of Jewish government, which the Lord Himself (they all confess) did establish, with like show of reason they might impute those faults which the prophets condemn in the governors of that commonwealth as to the English kind of regiment ecclesiastical (whereof also God Himself, though in other sort, is author) the stains and blemishes found in our State, which, springing from the root of human frailty and corruption, not only are, but have been always more or less, yea, and (for anything we know to the contrary) will be till

the world's end complained of, what form of government soever take place. Having gotten thus much sway in the hearts of men, a third step is to propose their own form of Church government as the only sovereign remedy of all evils, and to adorn it with all the glorious titles that may be. And the nature, as of men that have sick bodies, so likewise of the people in the crazedness of their minds, possessed with dislike and discontentment at things present, is to imagine that anything (the virtue whereof they have commended) would help them, but that most which they least have tried. The fourth degree of inducements is by fashioning the very notions and conceits of men's minds in such sort that when they read the Scripture they may think that everything soundeth towards the advancement of that discipline and to the utter disgrace of the contrary. Pythagoras, by bringing up of his scholars in speculative knowledge of numbers, made their conceits therein so strong that when they came to the contemplation of things natural they imagined that in every particular thing they even beheld, as it were with their eyes, how the elements of number gave essence and being to the works of nature—a thing in reason impossible, which notwithstanding, through their misfashioned preconceit, appeared unto them no less certain than if nature had written it in the very foreheads of all the creatures of God. When they of the family of love have it once in their heads that Christ doth not signify any one person, but a quality whereof many are partakers; that to be raised is nothing else but to be regenerated or endued with the said quality; and that when separation of them which have it from them which have it not is here made, this is judgment; how plainly do they imagine that the Scripture everywhere speaketh in the favour of that sect? And assuredly the very cause which maketh the simple and ignorant to think they even see how the word of God runneth currently on your side is that their minds are forestalled and their conceits perverted beforehand by being taught that an Elder doth signify a layman admitted only to the office of rule or government in the Church; a Doctor, one which may only teach, and neither preach nor administer the sacraments; a Deacon, one which hath charge of the alms box and of nothing else; that the sceptre, the rod, the throne and kingdom of Christ, are a form of regiment, only by pastors, elders, doctors, and deacons; that by mys-

tical resemblance Mount Sion and Jerusalem are the Churches which admit, Samaria and Babylon the Churches which oppugn, the said form of regiment. And in like sort they are taught to apply all things spoken of—repairing the walls and decayed parts of the city and temple of God by Esdras, Nehemiah, and the rest—as if purposely the Holy Ghost had therein meant to foreshadow what the authors of admonitions to the Parliament, of supplications to the Council, of petitions to Her Majesty, and of such other like writs, should either do or suffer in behalf of this their causes. From hence they proceed to an higher point, which is the persuading of men credulous and over-capable of such pleasing errors that it is the special illumination of the Holy Ghost whereby they discern those things in the Word which others reading yet discern them not. “Dearly beloved,” saith St. John, “give not credit unto every spirit.” There are but two ways whereby the Spirit leadeth men into all truth, the one extraordinary, the other common; the one belonging but unto some few, the other extending itself unto all that are of God; the one that which we call, by a special divine excellency, Revelation, the other Reason. If the Spirit, by such revelation, have discovered unto them the secrets of that discipline out of Scripture, they must profess themselves to be all (even men, women, and children) prophets; or if reason be the hand which the Spirit hath led them by, forasmuch as persuasions grounded upon reason are either weaker or stronger according to the force of those reasons whereupon the same are grounded, they must every of them, from the greatest to the least, be able for every several article to show some special reason as strong as their persuasion therein is earnest, otherwise how can it be but that some other sinews there are from which that overplus of strength in persuasion doth arise? Most sure it is that when men’s affections do frame their opinions, they are in defence of error more earnest a great deal than (for the most part) sound believers in the maintenance of truth apprehended according to the nature of that evidence which Scripture yieldeth, which being in some things plain, as in the principles of Christian doctrine, in some things, as in these matters of discipline, more dark and doubtful, frameth correspondently that inward assent which God’s most gracious Spirit worketh by it as by His effectual instrument. It is not, therefore, the fervent

earnestness of their persuasion, but the soundness of those reasons whereupon the same is built, which must declare their opinions in these things to have been wrought by the Holy Ghost, and not by the *fraud* of that evil Spirit which is even in his illusions strong. After that the fancy of the common sort hath once thoroughly apprehended the Spirit to be author of their persuasion concerning discipline, then is instilled into their hearts that the same Spirit, leading men into this opinion, doth thereby seal them to be God's children, and that as the state of the times now standeth, the most special token to know them that are God's own from others, is an earnest affection that way. This hath bred high terms of separation between such and the rest of the world, whereby the one sort are named, the brethren, the godly, and so forth ; the other, worldlings, time servers, pleasers of men, not of God, with such like. From hence they are easily drawn on to think it exceeding necessary, for fear of quenching that good Spirit, to use all means whereby the same may be both strengthened in themselves and made manifest unto others. This maketh them diligent hearers of such as are known that way to incline ; this maketh them eager to take and to seek all occasions of secret conference with such ; this maketh them glad to use such as counsellors and directors in all their dealings which are of weight, as contracts, testaments and the like ; this maketh them, through an unweariable desire of receiving instruction from the masters of that company, to cast off the care of those very affairs which do most concern their estate, and to think that then they are like unto Mary, commendable for making choice of the better part. Finally, this is it which maketh them willing to charge, yea, oftentimes even to overcharge, themselves, for such men's sustenance and relief, lest their zeal to the cause should any way be unwitnessed. For what is it which poor beguiled souls will not do through so powerful incitements ? In which respect it is also noted that most labour hath been bestowed to win and retain towards this cause them whose judgments are commonly weakest by reason of their sex ; and although not women "loaden with sins," as the Apostle St. Paul speaketh, but (as we verily esteem of them for the most part) women propense and inclinable to holiness, be otherwise edified in good things rather than carried away as captives into any kind of sin and evil, by such as enter into their houses with

purpose to plant there a zeal and a love towards this kind of discipline; yet some occasion is hereby ministered for men to think that if the cause which is thus furthered did gain by the soundness of proof whereupon it doth build itself, it would not most busily endeavour to prevail where least ability of judgment is, and therefore that this so eminent industry in making proselytes more of that sex than of the other groweth, for that they are deemed apter to serve as instruments and helps in the cause. After they are through the eagerness of their affection, that maketh them, which way soever they take, diligent in drawing their husbands, children, servants, friends, and allies the same way; after through that natural inclination unto pity which breedeth in them a greater readiness than in men to be bountiful towards their preachers who suffer want; after through sundry opportunities which they especially have to procure encouragements for their brethren; finally, after through a singular delight which they take in giving very large and particular intelligence, how all near about them stand affected as concerning the same cause. But be they women or be they men, if once they have tasted of that cup, let any man of contrary opinion open his mouth to persuade them, they close up their ears, his reasons they weigh not, all is answered with rehearsal of the words of John, "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us." As for the rest, ye are of the world, for this world's pomp and vanity it is that ye speak, and the world whose ye are heareth you. Which cloak sitteth no less fit on the back of their cause than of the Anabaptists, when the dignity, authority and honour of God's magistrates is upheld against them. Show these eagerly affected men their inability to judge of such matters; their answer is, "God hath chosen the simple." Convince them of folly, and that so plainly that very children upbraid them with it; they have their bucklers of like defence: "Christ's own Apostle was accounted mad. The best men evermore, by the sentence of the world, have been judged to be out of their right minds." When instruction doth them no good, let them feel but the least degree of most mercifully tempered severity, they fasten on the head of the Lord's vicegerents here on earth whatsoever they anywhere find uttered against the cruelty of bloodthirsty men; and to themselves they draw all the sentences which Scripture hath in the favour of innocence persecuted for the truth:

yea they are of their due and deserved sufferings no less proud than those ancient disturbers, to whom St. Augustine writeth, saying, "Martyrs rightly so named are they not which suffer for their disorder, and for the ungodly breach they have made of Christian unity, but which for righteousness' sake are persecuted. For Agar also suffered persecution at the hands of Sarah; wherein, she which did impose was holy, and the unrighteous which did bear the burden. In like sort, with the thieves was the Lord himself crucified, but they who were matched in the pain which they suffered were in the cause of their sufferings disjoined. If that must needs be the true church which doth endure persecution, and not that which persecuteth, let them ask of the apostle what church Sarah did represent when she held her maid in affliction. For even our mother which is free, the heavenly Jerusalem, that is to say, the true Church of God, was, as he doth affirm, prefigured in that very woman by whom the bondmaid was so sharply handled. Although, if all things be thoroughly scanned, she did in truth more persecute Sarah by proud resistance, than Sarah her by severity of punishment." These are the paths wherein ye have walked that are of the ordinary sort of men, these are the very steps ye have trodden, and the manifest degrees whereby ye are of your guides and directors trained up in that school: a custom of inuring your ears with reproof of faults especially in your governors, and use to attribute those faults to the kind of spiritual regiment under which ye live, boldness in warranting the force of their discipline for the cure of all such evils; a slight of ~~framing~~ your conceits to imagine that Scripture everywhere favoureth that discipline; persuasion that the cause why ye find it in Scripture is the illumination of the spirit; that the same spirit is a seal unto you of your nearness unto God, that ye are by all means to nourish and witness it in yourselves, and to strengthen on every side your minds against whatsoever might be of force to withdraw you from it. ✓

4. Wherefore to come unto you whose judgment is a lantern of direction for all the rest, you that frame thus the people's hearts, not altogether (as I willingly persuade myself) of a political intent or purpose, but yourselves being first overborne with the weight of greater men's judgments, on your shoulders is laid the burden of up-

holding the cause by argument. For which purpose sentences out of the Word of God ye allege divers, but so that when the same are difficult, thus it always in a manner falleth out that what things by virtue thereof ye urge upon us as altogether necessary, are found to be thence collected only by poor and marvellous slight conjectures. I need not give instance in any one sentence so alleged, for that I think the instance in any alleged otherwise a thing not easy to be given. A very strange thing, sure it were, that such a discipline as ye speak of should be taught by Christ and His apostles in the Word of God, and no Church ever have found it out, nor received it till this present time; contrariwise, the government against which ye bend yourselves, be observed everywhere throughout all generations and ages of the Christian world, no Church ever perceiving the Word of God to be against it. We require you to find out but one Church upon the face of the whole earth, that hath been ordered by your discipline, or hath not been ordered by ours, that is to say, by episcopal regiment, since the time that the blessed apostles were here conversant. Many things out of antiquity ye bring, as if the purest times of the Church had observed the selfsame orders which you require, and as though your desire were that the Churches of old should be patterns for us to follow, and even glasses wherein we might see the practice of that which by you is gathered out of Scripture. But the truth is ye mean nothing less. All this is done for fashion's sake only; for ye complain of it as of an injury that men should be willed to seek for examples and patterns of government in any of those times that have been before. Ye plainly hold that from the very apostles' times till this present age, wherein yourselves imagine ye have found out a right pattern of sound discipline, there never was any time safe to be followed. Which thing ye thus endeavour to prove. Out of Egesippus ye say that Eusebius writeth, how although as long as the apostles lived the Church did remain a pure virgin, yet after the death of the apostles, and after they were once gone whom God vouchsafed to make hearers of the divine wisdom with their own ears, the placing of wicked error began to come into the Church. Clement also, in a certain place, to confirm that there was corruption of doctrine immediately after the apostles' times,

allegeth the proverb that "there are few sons like their fathers." Socrates saith of the Church of Rome and Alexandria, the most famous churches in the apostles' times, that about the year 430, the Roman and Alexandrian bishops, leaving the sacred function, were degenerate to a secular rule or dominion. Hereupon ye conclude that it is not safe to fetch our government from any other than the apostles' times. Wherein by the way it may be noted, that, in proposing the apostles' times as a pattern for the Church to follow, though the desire of you all be one, the drift and purpose of you all is not one. The chiefest thing which lay reformers yearn for is, that the clergy may through conformity in state and condition be apostolical, poor as the apostles of Christ were poor. In which one circumstance if they imagine so great perfection, they must think that Church which hath such store of mendicant friars, a Church in that respect most happy. Were it for the glory of God, and the good of His Church in deed, that the clergy should be left even as bare as the apostles when they had neither staff nor scrip, that God, which should lay upon them the condition of His apostles, would, I hope, endue them with the selfsame affection which was in that holy apostle whose words concerning his own right virtuous contentment of heart, "as well how to want, as how to abound," are a most fit episcopal impress. The Church of Christ is a body mystical. (A body cannot stand unless the parts thereof be proportionable.) Let it therefore be required on both parts, at the hands of the clergy, to be in meanness of state like the apostles; at the hands of the laity to be as they were who lived under the apostles, and in this reformation there will be though little wisdom, yet some indifferency. But your reformation which are of the clergy (if yet it displease you not that I should say ye are of the clergy) seemeth to aim at a broader mark. Ye think that he which will perfectly reform, must bring the form of Church discipline unto the state which then it was at. A thing neither possible, nor certain, nor absolutely convenient. Concerning the first, which was used in the apostles' times, the Scripture fully declareth not; so that making their times the rule and canon of Church polity, ye make a rule which being not possible to be fully known, is as impossible to be kept. Again, since the later even of the apostles' own times, had that which in the former was not thought upon; in this

✓ general proposing of the apostles' times, there is no certainty which should be followed, especially seeing that ye give us great cause to doubt how far ye allow those times. For albeit the lover of anti-christian building were not, ye say, as then set up, yet the foundations thereof were secretly and under the ground laid in the apostles' times, so that all other times ye plainly reject, and the apostles' own times ye approve with marvellously great suspicion, leaving it intricate and doubtful wherein we are to keep ourselves unto the pattern of their times. Thirdly, whereas it is the error of the common multitude to consider only what hath been of old, and, if the same were well, to see whether still it continues, if not, to condemn that presently which is, and never to search upon what ground or consideration the change might grow: such rudeness cannot be in you so well borne with, whom learning and judgment hath enabled much more soundly to discern how far the times of the Church, and the orders thereof may alter without offence. True, it is the more ancient, the better ceremonies of religion are; howbeit, not absolutely true, and, without exception, but true only so far forth as those different ages do agree in the state of those things, for which at the first those rites, orders, and ceremonies were instituted. In the apostles' times that was harmless which, being now revived, would be scandalous, as their *oscula sancta*. Those feasts of charity, which being instituted by the apostles, were retained in the Church long after, are not now thought anywhere needful. What man is there of understanding unto whom it is not manifest how the way of providing for the clergy by tithes, the device of alms-houses for the poor, the sorting out of the people into their several parishes, together with sundry other things which the apostles' times could not have (being now established), are much more convenient and fit for the Church of Christ than if the same should be taken away for conformity's sake with the ancientest and first times. The orders therefore which were observed in the apostles' times are not ✓ to be urged as a rule universally, either sufficient or necessary. If they be nevertheless on your part, it still remaineth to be better proved, that the form of discipline which ye entitle apostolical, was in the apostles' time exercised. For of this very thing ye fail even touching that which ye make most account of, as being matter of

substance in discipline, I mean the power of your lay elders, and the difference of your doctors from the pastors in all Churches. So that in some, we may be bold to conclude, that besides these last times, which for insolence, pride, and egregious contempt of all good order are the worst, there are none wherein ye can truly affirm that the complete form of your discipline, or the substance thereof, was practised. The evidence, therefore, of antiquity failing you, ye fly to the judgments of such learned men as seem by their writings to be of opinion that all Christian Churches should receive your discipline and abandon ours. Wherein, as ye heap up the names of a number of men not unworthy to be had in honour, so there are a number whom when ye mention, although it serve ye to purpose with the ignorant and vulgar sort, who measure by tale and not by weight, yet surely they who know what quality and value the men are of, will think ye draw very near the dregs. But were they all of as great account as the best and chiefest among them, with us notwithstanding neither are they, neither ought they to be of such reckoning, that their opinion or conjecture should cause the laws of the Church of England to give place. Much less when they neither do all agree in that opinion, and of them which are at agreement the most part through a courteous inducement, have followed one man as their guide, finally, that one therein not unlikely to have swerved. If any chance to say, it is probable that in the apostles' times there were lay elders, or not to mislike the continuance of them in the Church; or to affirm that bishops at the first were a name, but not a power, distinct from Presbyters; or to speak anything in praise of those Churches which are without episcopal regiment, or to reprove the fault of such as abuse that calling; all these ye register for men, persuaded as you are, that every Christian church standeth bound by the law of God to put down bishops, and in their rooms to erect an eldership, so authorized as you would have it, for the government of each parish. Deceived greatly they are, therefore, who think that all they whose names are cited amongst the favourers of this cause are on any such verdict agreed. Yet touching some material points of your discipline, a kind of agreement we grant there is amongst many divines of reformed churches abroad. For first to do as the Church of Geneva

did the learned in some other Churches must needs be the more willing, who having used in like manner not the slow and tedious help of proceeding by public authority, but the people's more quick endeavour for alteration, in such an exigent I see not well how they could have stayed to deliberate about any other regiment than that which already was devised to their hands, that which in like case had been taken, that which was easiest to be established without delay, that which was likeliest to content the people by reason of some kind of sway which it giveth them. When, therefore, the example of one Church was thus at the first almost through a kind of constraint or necessity followed by many, their concurrence in persuasion about some material points belonging to the same policy is not strange. For we are not to marvel greatly if they, which have all done the same thing, do easily embrace the same opinion as concerning their own doings. Besides, mark, I beseech you, that which Galen in matter of philosophy noteth, for the like falleth out even in questions of higher knowledge. It fareth many times with men's opinions as with rumours and reports. That which a credible person telleth, is easily thought probable by such as are well persuaded of him ; but if two, or three, or four, agree all in the same tale, they judge it then to be out of controversy, and so are many times overtaken for want of due consideration : either some common cause leading them all into error, or one man's oversight deceiving many through their too much credulity and easiness of belief. Though ten persons be brought to give testimony in any cause, yet if the knowledge they have of the thing whereunto they come as witnesses, appear to have grown from some one amongst them, and to have spread itself from hand to hand, they all are in force but as one testimony. Nor is it otherwise here where the daughter Churches do speak their mother's dialect ; here where so many sing one song, by reason that he is the guide of the choir concerning whose deserved authority amongst even the gravest divines we have already spoken at large. Will ye ask what should move those many learned to be followers of one man's judgment, no necessity of argument forcing them thereunto ? Your demand is answered by yourselves. Loath ye are to think that they, whom ye judge to have attained, as sound knowledge in all points of doctrine as any since the apostles' time, should mistake in discipline.

Such is naturally our affection, that whom in great things we mightily admire ; in them we are not persuaded willingly that anything should be amiss. The reason whereof is, for that as dead flies putrefy the ointment of the apothecary, so a little folly him that is in estimation for wisdom. This in every profession hath too much authorized the judgment of a few. This with Germans hath caused Luther, and with many other Churches Calvin, to prevail in all things. Yet are we not able to define whether the wisdom of that God (who setteth before us in holy Scripture so many admirable patterns of virtue, and no one of them without somewhat noted wherein they were culpable to the end that to him alone it might always be acknowledged, "Thou only art holy, Thou only art just"), might not permit those worthy vessels of his glory to be in some things blemished with the stain of human frailty, even for this cause, lest we should esteem of any man above that which behoveth.

5. Notwithstanding, as though ye were able to say a great deal more than hitherto your books have revealed to the world, earnest challengers ye are of trial by some public disputation. Wherein if the thing ye crave be no more, than only leave to dispute openly about those matters that are in question, the schools in universities (for anything I know) are open unto you : they have their yearly acts and commencements, besides other disputations both ordinary and upon occasion, wherein the several parts of our own ecclesiastical discipline are oftentimes offered unto that kind of examination ; the learnedest of you have been of late years noted seldom or never absent from thence at the time of those greater assemblies ; and the favour of proposing there in convenient sort whatsoever ye can object (which thing myself have known them to grant of scholastical courtesy unto strangers) neither hath (as I think) nor ever will (I presume) be denied you. If your suit be to have some great extraordinary confluence, in expectation whereof the laws that already are should sleep and have no power over you, till in the hearing of thousands ye all did acknowledge your error and renounce the further prosecution of your cause ; happily, they whose authority is required unto the satisfying of your demand, do think it both dangerous to admit such concourse of divided minds, and unmeet that laws, which being once solemnly established, are to exact obedience of all men and to constrain thereunto, should, so

far, stoop as to hold themselves in suspense from taking any effect upon you till some disputer can persuade you to be obedient. A law is the deed of the whole body politic, whereof if ye judge yourselves to be any part, then is the law even your deed also. And were it reason in things of this quality to give men audience pleading for the overthrow of that which their own very deed hath ratified? Laws that have been approved may be (no man doubteth) again repealed, and to that end also disputed against, by the authors thereof themselves. But this is when the whole doth deliberate what laws each part shall observe, and not when a part refuseth the laws which the whole hath orderly agreed upon. Notwithstanding, forasmuch as the cause we maintain is (God be thanked) such as needeth not to shun any trial, might it please them, on whose approbation the matter dependeth, to condescend so far, unto you in this behalf, I wish heartily that proof were made even by solemn conference in orderly and quiet sort, whether you would yourselves be satisfied, or else could by satisfying others draw them to your part. Provided always, first inasmuch as ye go about to destroy a thing which is in force, and to draw in that which hath not as yet been received; to impose on us that which we think not ourselves bound unto, and to overthrow those things whereof we are possessed; that therefore ye are not to claim in any conference other than the plaintiff's or opponent's part, which must consist altogether in proof and confirmation of two things: the one, that our orders by you condemned we ought to abolish; the other, that yours we are bound to accept in the stead thereof. Secondly, because the questions in controversy between us are many, if once we descend into particularities, that for the easier and more orderly proceeding therein, the most general be first discussed, nor any question left of, nor in each question the prosecution of any one argument given over and another taken in hand, till the issue whereunto by replies and answers both parts are come, be collected, read and acknowledged as well on the one side as on the other to be the plain conclusion which they are grown unto. Thirdly, for avoiding of the manifold inconveniences whereunto ordinary and extemporal disputes are subject, as also because if ye should singly dispute one by one as every man's own wit did best serve, it might be conceived by the rest that happily some

other would have done more ; the chiefest of you do all agree in this action that whom ye shall then choose your speaker, by him that which is publicly brought into disputation be acknowledged by all your consents not to be his allegation but yours, such as ye all are agreed upon, and have required him to deliver in all your names : the true copy whereof being taken by a notary that a reasonable time be allowed for return of answer unto you in the like form. Fourthly, whereas a number of conferences have been had in other causes with the less effectual success, by reason of partial and untrue reports, published afterwards unto the world, that to prevent this evil there be at the first a solemn declaration made on both parts of their agreement to have that very book and no other set abroad, wherein their present authorized notaries do write those things fully and only, which being written and there read, are by their own open testimony acknowledged to be their own. Other circumstances hereunto belonging, whether for the choice of time, place, and language, or for prevention of impertinent and needless speech, or to any end and purpose else, they may be thought on when occasion serveth. In this sort to broach my private conceit for the ordering of a public action, I should be loath (albeit I do it not otherwise than under correction of them whose gravity and wisdom ought in such cases to over-rule), but that so venturous boldness I see is a thing now general, and am thereby of good hope that where all men are licensed to offend, no man will show himself a sharp accuser.

6. What success God may give unto any such kind of conference or disputation we cannot tell. But of this we are right sure, that nature, Scripture, and experience itself, have all taught the world to seek for the ending of contentions by submitting itself unto some judicial and definitive sentence, whereunto neither part that contendeth may, under any pretence or colour, refuse to stand. This must needs be effectual and strong. As for other means without this, they seldom prevail. I would, therefore, know whether for the ending of these irksome strifes, wherein you and your followers do stand thus formally divided against the authorized guides of this Church, and the rest of the people subject unto their charge, whether I say ye be content to refer your cause to any other higher judgment than your own ; or else intend to persist and proceed as ye

have begun, till yourselves can be persuaded to condemn yourselves. If your determination be this, we can be but sorry that ye should deserve to be reckoned with such, of whom God himself pronounceth, "The way of peace they have not known." Ways of peaceable conclusion there are, but these two certain: the one, a sentence of judicial decision given by authority thereto appointed within ourselves; the other, the like kind of sentence given by a more universal authority. The former of which two ways God himself in the law prescribeth, and His Spirit it was which directeth the very first Christian Churches in the world to use the latter. The ordinance of God in the law was this:—"If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment between blood and blood, between plea, &c., then shalt thou arise, and go up unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, and thou shalt come unto the priests of the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and ask, and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment, and thou shalt do according to that thing which they of that place which the Lord hath chosen show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee, according to the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, shalt thou do; thou shalt not decline from the thing which they shall show thee to the right hand nor to the left. And that man that will do presumptuously, not hearkening unto the priest (that standeth before the Lord thy God to minister there) or unto the judge, that man shall die, and thou shalt take away evil from Israel." When there grew in the Church of Christ a question: "Whether the Gentiles, believing, might be saved, although they were not circumcised after the manner of Moses, nor did observe the rest of those legal rites and ceremonies whereunto the Jews were bound;" after great dissension and disputation about it, their conclusion in the end was, to have it determined by sentence at Jerusalem: which was accordingly done in a council there assembled for the same purpose. Are ye able to allege any just and sufficient cause wherefore absolutely ye should not condescend in this controversy to have your judgments overruled by some such definitive sentence, whether it fall out to be given with or against you, that so these tedious contentions may cease? Ye will, perhaps, make answer, that

being persuaded already as touching the truth of your cause, ye are not to hearken unto any sentence, no, not though angels should define otherwise, as the blessed apostles' own example teacheth; again, that men, yea, councils may err, and that unless the judgment given do satisfy your minds, unless it be such as ye can by no further argument oppugn, in a word, unless you perceive and acknowledge it yourselves consonant with God's word, to stand unto it not allowing it, were to sin against your own consciences. But consider, I beseech you, first as touching the apostle, how that wherein he was so resolute and peremptory, our Lord Jesus Christ made manifest unto him even by intuitive revelation, wherein there was no possibility of error. That which you are persuaded of ye have it no otherwise than by your own only probable collection, and, therefore, such bold asseverations as in him were admirable should in your mouths but argue rashness. God was not ignorant that the priests and judges, whose sentence in matters of controversy He ordained should stand, both might and oftentimes would be deceived in their judgment. Howbeit, better it was in the eye of His understanding that sometimes an erroneous sentence definitive should prevail, till the same authority, perceiving such oversight, might afterwards correct or reverse it, than that strifes should have respite to grow and not come speedily unto some end. Neither wish we that men should do anything which in their hearts they are persuaded they ought not to do, but this persuasion ought, we say, to be fully settled in their hearts, that in litigious and controverted causes of such quality the will of God is to have them to do whatsoever the sentence of judicial and final decision shall determine, yea, though it seem in their private opinion to swerve utterly from that which is right: as no doubt many times the sentence amongst the Jews did seem unto one part or other contending; and yet in this case God did then allow them to do that which in their private judgment it seemed, yea, and perhaps truly seemed, that the law did disallow. For if God be not the author of confusion, but of peace, then can He not be the author of our refusal, but of our contentment, to stand unto some definitive sentence, without which almost impossible it is that either we should avoid confusion, or ever hope to attain peace. To small purpose had the Council of Jerusalem been assembled, if once their deter-

mination being set down, men might afterwards have defended their former opinions. When, therefore, they had given their definitive sentence all controversy was at an end. Things were disputed before they came to be determined, men afterwards were not to dispute any longer, but to obey. The sentence of judgment finished their strife, which their disputes before judgment could not do. This was ground sufficient for any reasonable man's conscience to build the duty of obedience upon: whatsoever his own opinion were as touching the matter before in question. So full of wilfulness and self-liking is our nature, that without some definitive sentence, which being given may stand, and a necessity of silence on both sides afterward imposed, small hope there is that strifes thus far prosecuted will in short time quietly end. Now it were in vain to ask you whether ye could be content that the sentence of any court already erected should be so far authorized, as that among the Jews, established by God himself, for the determining of all controversies: "That man which will do presumptuously, not hearkening unto the priest that standeth before the Lord to minister there, nor unto the judge, let him die." Ye have given us already to understand what your opinion is in part concerning her sacred Majesty's Court of High Commission, the nature whereof is the same with that amongst the Jews, albeit the power be not so great. The other way, happily, may like you better, because Master Beza, in his last book save one written about these matters, professeth himself to be now weary of such combats and encounters, whether by word or writing, inasmuch as he findeth that controversies thereby are made but brawls, and therefore wisheth that in some common lawful assembly of churches all these strifes may at once be decided. Shall there be then in the meanwhile no doings? Yes. There are the weightier matters of the law—judgment and mercy and fidelity. These things we ought to do; and these things, while we contend about less, we leave undone. Happier are they whom the Lord when He cometh shall find doing in these things, than disputing about doctors, elders, and deacons. Or if there be no remedy, but somewhat needs ye must do which may tend to the setting forward of your discipline, do that which wise men, who think some statute of the realm more fit to be repealed than to stand in force, are accustomed to do before they come to Parliament, where the place of enacting

is, that is to say, spend the time in re-examining more duly your cause, and in more thoroughly considering of that which ye labour to overthrow. As for the orders which are established, since equity and reason, the law of nature, God, and man, do all favour that which is in being till orderly judgment of decision be given against it, it is but justice to exact of you, and perverseness in you it should be to deny thereunto your willing obedience. Not that I judge it a thing allowable for men to observe those laws which in their hearts they are steadfastly persuaded to be against the law of God; but your persuasion in this case ye are all bound for the time to suspend, and in otherwise doing ye offend against God, by troubling His Church without any just or necessary cause. Be it that there are some reasons inducing you to think hardly of our laws. Are those reasons demonstrative, are they necessary, or but mere probabilities only? An argument necessary and demonstrative is such, as being proposed unto any man and understood, the mind cannot choose but inwardly assent. Any one such reason discharge, I grant, the conscience, and setteth it at full liberty. For the public approbation given by the body of this whole Church unto those things which are established doth make it but probable that they are good. And, therefore, unto a necessary proof that they are not good it must give place. But if the skilfullest amongst you can show that all the books ye have hitherto written be able to afford any one argument of this nature, let the instance be given. As for probabilities, what thing was there ever set down so agreeable with sound reason but some probable show against it might be made? Is it meet that when publicly things are received and have taken place, general obedience thereunto should cease to be exacted, in case this or that private person, led with some probable conceit, should make open protestation, "Peter or John disallow them, and pronounce them nought?" In which case your answer will be, that concerning the laws of our Church they are not only condemned in the opinion of a private man but of thousands, yea, and even of those amongst which divers are in public charge and authority. As though when public consent of the whole hath established anything, every man's judgment being thereunto compared were not private, howsoever his calling be to some kind of public charge. So that of peace and quietness there is not any way possible unless the probable

voice of every entire society or body politic over-rule all private of like nature in the same body. Which thing effectually proveth that God being author of peace, and not of confusion in the Church, must needs be author of those men's peaceable resolutions who, concerning these things, have determined with themselves to think and do as the Church they are of decreeth, till they see necessary cause enforcing them to the contrary.

+ 7. Nor is mine own intent any other in these several books of discourse than to make it appear unto you that for the ecclesiastical laws of this land we are led by great reason to observe them, and ye by no necessity bound to impugn them. It is no part of my secret meaning to draw you hereby into hatred, or to set upon the face of this cause any fairer glass than the naked truth doth afford: but my whole endeavour is to resolve the conscience, and to show as near as I can what in this controversy the heart is to think, if it will follow the light of sound and sincere judgment, without either cloud of prejudice or mist of passionate affection. Wherefore, seeing that laws and ordinances in particular, whether such as we observe, or such as yourselves would have established, when the mind doth sift and examine them, it must needs have often recourse to a number of doubts and questions about the nature, kinds, and qualities of laws in general, whereof, unless it be thoroughly informed, there will appear no certainty to stay our persuasion upon. I have for that cause set down in the first place an introduction on both sides needful to be considered: declaring therein what law is, how different kinds of laws there are, and what force they are of according unto each kind. This done, because ye suppose the laws for which ye strive are found in Scripture, but those not against which we strive, and upon this surmise are drawn to hold it as the very main pillar of your whole cause, that Scripture ought to be the only rule of all our actions, and consequently that the Church-orders which we observe being not commanded in Scripture are offensive and displeasing unto God. I have 2. spent the second book in sifting of this point, which standeth with you for the first and chiefest principle whereon ye build. 3. Whereunto the next in degree is, that as God will have always a Church upon earth while the world doth continue, and that Church stand in need of government, of which government it behoveth Himself to be both the

author and teacher: so it cannot stand with duty, that man should ever presume in any wise to change and alter the same; and, therefore, that in Scripture there must of necessity be found some particular form of ecclesiastical polity, the laws whereof admit not any kind of alteration. ✓
 The first three books being thus ended, the fourth proceedeth from the general grounds and foundations of your cause, unto your general accusations against us, as having in the orders of our Church (for so you pretend) corrupted the right form of Church polity with manifold popish rites and ceremonies, which certain reformed Churches have banished from amongst them, and have thereby given us such example as (you think) we ought to follow. This your assertion hath herein drawn us to make search, whether these be just exceptions against the customs of our Church, when ye plead that they are the same which the Church of Rome hath, or that they are not the same which some other reformed Churches have devised. Of those four books which remain and are bestowed about the specialities of that cause which lieth in controversy, the first examineth the causes by you alleged, whereto the public duties of Christian religion, as our prayers, our sacraments, and the rest, should not be ordered in such sort as with us they are, nor that power whereby the persons of men are consecrated unto the ministry be disposed of in such manner as the laws of this Church do allow. The second and third are concerning the power of jurisdiction: the one, whether lay men such as your governing elders are ought in all congregations for ever to be invested with that power; the other, whether bishops may have that power over other pastors, and therewithal that honour which with us they have. 4
 And because besides the power of order which all consecrated persons have, and the power of jurisdiction which neither they all, nor they only have, there is a third power, a power of ecclesiastical dominion, communicable, as we think, unto persons not ecclesiastical, and most fit to be restrained unto the Prince our Sovereign commander over the whole body politic: the eighth book we have allotted unto this question, and have sifted therein your objections against those pre-eminences royal which thereunto appertain. 6
 Thus have I laid before you the brief of these my travails, and presented under your view the limbs of that cause litigious between us: the whole entire body whereof being

thus compact, it shall be no troublesome thing for any man to find each particular controversy's resting-place, and the coherence it hath with those things, either on which it dependeth or which depend on it.

8. The case so standing, therefore, my brethren, as it doth, the wisdom of governors ye must not blame, in that they further also forecasting the manifold strange and dangerous innovations which are more than likely to follow if your discipline should take place, have for that cause thought it hitherto a part of their duty to withstand your endeavours that way. The rather, for that they have seen already some small beginnings of the fruits thereof in them, who concurring with you in judgment about the necessity of that discipline have adventured without more ado to separate themselves from the rest of the Church, and to put your speculations in execution. These men's hastiness the warier sort of you doth not commend, ye wish they had held themselves longer in, and not so dangerously flown abroad before the feathers of the cause had been grown; their error with merciful terms ye reprove, naming them in great commiseration of mind your poor brethren. They on the contrary side more bitterly accuse you as their false brethren, and against you they plead, saying, from your breasts it is that we have sucked those things, which when ye delivered unto us ye termed that heavenly, sincere, and wholesome milk of God's word, howsoever ye now abhor as poison that which the virtue thereof hath wrought and brought forth in us. Ye sometime our companions, guides, and familiars, with whom we have had most sweet consultations, are now become our professed adversaries because we think the statute-congregations in England to be no true Christian Churches; because we have severed ourselves from them, and because without their leave or licence that are in civil authority we have secretly framed our own Churches according to the platform of the word of God. For of that point between you and us there is no controversy. Alas! what would ye have us to do? At such time as ye were content to accept us in the number of your own, your teachings we heard, we read your writings, and though we would, yet able we are not to forget with what zeal ye have ever professed that in the English congregations (for so many of them as be ordered according unto their own laws), the very public service of God is fraught, as touching matter,

with heaps of intolerable pollutions, and as concerning form, borrowed from the shop of Antichrist; hateful both ways in the eyes of the most holy: the kind of their government by bishops and archbishops, anti-christian, that discipline which Christ hath essentially tied, that is to say, so united unto His Church that we cannot account it really to be His Church which hath not in it the same discipline, that very discipline no less there despised, than in the highest throne of Antichrist, all such parts of the word of God as do any way concern that discipline, no less unsoundly taught and interpreted by all authorized English pastors than by Antichrist's factors themselves; at baptism crossing, at the Supper of the Lord kneeling, at both a number of other, the most notorious badges of anti-christian recognition usual. Being moved with these and the like your effectual discourses, whereunto we gave most attentive ear, till they entered even into our souls, and were as fire within our bosoms; we thought we might hereof be bold to conclude that since no such anti-christian synagogue may be accounted a true Church of Christ, ye by accusing all congregations ordered according to the laws of England as anti-christian, did mean to condemn those congregations as not being any of them worthy the name of a true Christian Church. Ye tell us now it is not your meaning. But what meant your often threatenings of them, who professing themselves the inhabitants of Mount Zion, were too loath to depart wholly as they should out of Babylon? Whereat our hearts being fearfully troubled, we durst not, we durst not continue longer so near her confines, lest her plagues might suddenly overtake us, before we did cease to be partakers with her sins: for so we could not choose but acknowledge with grief that we were, when they doing evil, we by our presence in their assemblies seemed to like thereof, or at leastwise not so earnestly to dislike as became men heartily zealous of God's glory. For adventuring to erect the discipline of Christ without the leave of the Christian magistrate happily ye may condemn us as fools, in that we hazard thereby our estates and persons, further than you which are that way more wise think necessary, but of any offence or sin therein committed against God, with what conscience can you accuse us when your own positions are that the things we observe should every of them be dearer unto us than ten thousand lives: that they

are the pereemptory commandments of God ; that no mortal man can dispense with them, and that the magistrate grievously sinneth in not constraining thereunto? Will ye blame any man for doing that of his own accord, which all men should be compelled to do that are not willing of themselves? When God commandeth, shall we answer that we will obey if so be Cæsar will grant us leave? Is discipline an ecclesiastical matter or a civil? If an ecclesiastical, it must of necessity belong to the duty of the minister. And the minister (ye say) holdeth all his authority of doing whatsoever belongeth unto the spiritual charge of the House of God even immediately from God himself, without dependency upon any magistrate. Whereupon it followeth, as we suppose, that the hearts of the people being willing to be under the sceptre of Christ, the minister of God, into whose hands the Lord himself hath put that sceptre, is without all excuse if thereby he guide them not. Nor do we find that hitherto greatly ye have disliked those Churches abroad where the people with direction of their godly ministers have even against the will of the magistrate brought in either the doctrine or discipline of Jesus Christ. For which cause we must now think the very same thing of you, which our Saviour did sometime utter concerning false-hearted Scribes and Pharisees, "They say and do not." Thus the foolish Barrowist deriveth his scheme by way of conclusion, as to him it seemeth, directly and plainly out of your principles. Him, therefore, we leave to be satisfied by you from whom he hath sprung. And if such by your own acknowledgment be persons dangerous, although as yet the alterations which they have made are of small and tender growth, the changes likely to ensue throughout all states and vocations within this land, in case your desire should take place, must be thought upon. First concerning the supreme power of the highest, they are no small prerogatives, which now thereunto belonging the form of your discipline will constrain it to resign, as in the last book of this treatise we have showed at large. Again it may justly be feared whether our English nobility, when the matter came in trial, would contentedly suffer themselves to be always at the call, and to stand to the sentence of a number of mean persons, assisted with the presence of their poor teacher, a man (as sometimes it happeneth) though better able to speak, yet

little or no whit apter to judge than the rest ; from whom, be their dealings never so absurd (unless it be by way of complaint to a synod), no appeal may be made unto any one of higher power, inasmuch as the order of your discipline admitteth no standing inequality of courts, no spiritual judge to have any ordinary superior on earth, but as many supremacies as there are parishes and several congregations. Neither is it altogether without cause that so many do fear the overthrow of all learning as a threatened sequel of this your intended discipline. For if the world's preservation depend upon the multitude of the wise ; and of that sort the number hereafter be not likely to wax over great, when (that wherewith the son of Syrach professeth himself at the heart grieved) men of understanding are already so little set by : how should their minds whom the love of so precious a jewel filleth with secret jealousy even in regard of the least things, which may any way hinder the flourishing estate thereof, choose but misdoubt lest this discipline, which always you match with divine doctrine as her natural and true sister, be found unto all kinds of knowledge a stepmother ; seeing that the greatest worldly hopes, which are proposed unto the chiefest kind of learning, ye seek utterly to extirpate as weeds ; and have grounded your platform on such propositions, as do after a sort undermine those most renowned habitations, where through the goodness of Almighty God all commendable arts and sciences are with exceeding great industry hitherto (and so may they for ever continue) studied, proceeded in, and professed. To charge you as purposely bent to the overthrow of that wherein so many of you have attained no small perfection, were injurious. Only therefore I wish that yourselves did well consider how opposite certain of your positions are unto the state of collegiate societies, whereon the two Universities consist. Those degrees which their statutes bind them to take, are by your laws taken away ; yourselves who have fought them ye so excuse, as that ye would have men to think ye judge them not allowable, but tolerable only, and to be borne with for some help which ye find in them unto the furtherance of your purposes, till the corrupt estate of the Church may be better reformed. Your laws forbidding ecclesiastical persons utterly the exercise of civil power, must needs deprive the heads and masters in the same colleges of all such authority as now they

exercise, either at home, by punishing the faults of those, who not as children to their parents by the law of Nature, but altogether by civil authority, are subject unto them, or abroad, by keeping courts amongst their tenants, Your laws making permanent inequality amongst ministers a thing repugnant to the Word of God enforce those colleges, the seniors whereof are all or any part of them ministers under the government of a master in the same vocation, to choose as oft as they meet together a new president. For if so ye judge it necessary to do in synods, for the avoiding of permanent inequality amongst ministers, the same cause must needs even in these collegiate assemblies enforce the like. Except peradventure ye mean to avoid all such absurdities, by dissolving those corporations, and by bringing the Universities unto the form of the school of Geneva. Which thing men the rather are inclined to look for, inasmuch as the ministry, whereinto their founders with singular providence have by the same statutes appointed them necessarily to enter at a certain time, your laws bind them much more necessarily to forbear, till some parish abroad call for them. Your opinion concerning the law civil is, that the knowledge thereof might be spared, as a thing which this land doth not need. Professors in that kind being few, ye are the bolder to spurn at them, and not to dissemble your minds as concerning their removal: in whose studies although myself have not much been conversant; nevertheless exceeding great cause I see there is to wish that thereunto more encouragement were given, as well for the singular treasures of wisdom therein contained, as also for the great use we have thereof both in decision of certain kinds of causes arising daily within ourselves, and especially for commerce with nations abroad, whereunto that knowledge is most requisite. The reasons wherewith ye would persuade that Scripture is the only rule to frame all our actions by, are in every respect as effectual for proof that the same is the only law whereby to determine all our civil controversies. And then what doth let, but that as those men may have their desire, who frankly broach it already that the work of reformation will never be perfect, till the law of Jesus Christ be received alone; so pleaders and counsellors may bring their books of the common law, and bestow them as the students of curious and needless arts did theirs in the apostles' time! I leave them to scan how far those words of yours may reach, where-

in ye declare that whereas now many houses lie waste through inordinate suits of law, "This one thing will show the excellency of discipline for the wealth of the realm, and quiet of subjects, that the Church is to censure such a party who is apparently troublesome and contentious, and without *reasonable cause* upon a mere will and stomach doth vex and molest his brother and trouble the country." For mine own part I do not see but that it might very well agree with your principles, if your discipline were fully planted, even to send out your writs of surcease unto all courts of England besides, for the most things handled in them. A great deal further I might proceed and descend lower. But forasmuch as against all these and the like difficulties your answer is, that we ought to search what things are consonant to God's will, not which be most for our own ease; and therefore that your discipline being (for such is your error) the absolute commandment of Almighty God, it must be received although the world by receiving it should be clean turned upside down; herein lieth the greatest danger of all. For whereas the name of divine authority is used to countenance these things, which are not the commandments of God, but your own erroneous collections; on Him ye must father whatsoever ye shall afterwards be led, either to do in withstanding the adversaries of your cause, or to think in maintenance of your doings. And what this may be, God doth know. In such kinds of error, the mind once imagining itself to seek the execution of God's will, laboureth forthwith to remove both things and persons which any way hinder it from taking place; and in such cases if any strange or new thing seem requisite to be done, a strange and new opinion concerning the lawfulness thereof, is withal received and broached under countenance of divine authority. One example herein may serve for many, to show that false opinions touching the will of God to have things done, are wont to bring forth mighty and violent practices against the hindrances of them; and those practices new opinions more pernicious than the first, yea, most extremely sometimes opposite to that which the first did seem to intend. Where the people took upon them the reformation of the Church by casting out popish superstition, they having received from their pastors a general instruction that whatsoever the heavenly Father hath not planted, must be rooted out, proceeded in some foreign places so far, that down went ora-

tories and the very temples of God themselves. For as they chanced to take the compass of their commission stricter or larger, so their dealings were accordingly more or less moderate. Amongst others there sprang up presently one kind of men, with whose zeal and forwardness the rest being compared, were thought to be marvellous cold and dull. These grounding themselves on rules more general; that whatsoever the law of Christ commandeth not, thereof Antichrist is the author; and that whatsoever Antichrist or his adherents did in the world, the true professors of Christ are to undo; found out many things more than others had done, the extirpation whereof was in their conceit as necessary as of anything before removed. Hereupon they secretly made their doleful complaints everywhere as they went, that albeit the world did begin to profess some dislike of that which was evil in the kingdom of darkness, yet fruits worthy of a true repentance were not seen; and that if men did repent as they ought, they must endeavour to purge the truth of all manner of evil, to the end there might follow a new world afterward, wherein righteousness only should dwell. Private repentance they said must appear by every man's fashioning his own life contrary unto the custom and orders of this present world, both in greater things and in less. To this purpose they had always in their mouths those greater things, charity, faith, the true fear of God, the cross, the mortification of the flesh. All their exhortations were to set light of the things in this world, to count riches and honours vanity, and in token thereof not only to seek neither, but if men were possessors of both, even to cast away the one and resign the other, that all men might see their unfeigned conversion unto Christ. They were solicitors of men to fasts, to often meditations of heavenly things, and as it were conferences in secret with God by prayers, not framed according to the frozen manner of the world, but expressing such fervent desires as might even force God to hearken unto them. Where they found men in diet, attire, furniture of house, or any other way observers of civility and decent order, such they reproved as being carnally and earthly minded. Every word otherwise than severely and sadly uttered, seemed to pierce like a sword through them. If any man were pleasant, their manner was presently with sighs to repeat these words of our Saviour Christ, "Woe be to you which now laugh, for ye shall lament." So great was their delight to

be always in trouble, that such as did quietly lead their lives they judged of all other men to be in most dangerous case. They so much affected to cross the ordinary custom in everything, that when other men's use was to put on better attire, they would be sure to show themselves openly abroad in worse : the ordinary names of the days in the week they thought it a kind of profaneness to use, and therefore accustomed themselves to make no other distinction than by numbers, the first, second, third day. From this they proceeded unto public reformation, first ecclesiastical, and then civil. Touching the former, they boldly avouched, that themselves only had the truth, which thing upon peril of their lives they would at all times defend ; and that since the apostles lived, the same was never before in all points sincerely taught. Wherefore that things might again be brought to that ancient integrity which Jesus Christ by His word requireth, they began to control the ministers of the Gospel for attributing so much force and virtue unto the Scriptures of God read, whereas the truth was, that when the word is said to engender faith in the heart, and to convert the soul of man, or to work any such spiritual divine effect, these speeches are not thereunto applicable as it is read or preached, but as it is ingrafted in us by the power of the Holy Ghost opening the eyes of our understanding, and so revealing the mysteries of God, according to that which Jeremiah promised before should be, saying, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and I will write it in their hearts." The Book of God they notwithstanding for the most part so admired, that other disputation against their opinions than only by allegation of Scripture they would not hear : besides it, they thought no other writings in the world should be studied ; insomuch as one of their great prophets exhorting them to cast away all respects unto human writings, so far to his motion they condescended, that as many as had any books save the Holy Bible in their custody, they brought and set them publicly on fire. When they and their Bibles were alone together, what strange fantastical opinion soever at any time entered into their heads, their use was to think the Spirit taught it them. Their frenzies concerning our Saviour's incarnation, the state of souls departed, and such like, are things needless to be rehearsed. And forasmuch as they were of the same suite with those of whom the Apostle speaketh, saying, "They are still learning, but never

attain to the knowledge of truth," it was no marvel to see them every day broach some new thing, not heard of before. Which restless levity they did interpret to be their growing to spiritual perfection, and a proceeding from faith to faith. The differences amongst them grew by this means in a manner infinite, so that scarcely was there found anyone of them, the forge of whose brain was not possessed with some special mystery. Whereupon, although their mutual contentions were most fiercely prosecuted amongst themselves, yet when they came to defend the cause common to them all against the adversaries of their faction, they had ways to lick one another whole, the founder in his own persuasion, excusing *The Dear Brethren*, which were not so far enlightened, and professing a charitable hope of the mercy of God towards them notwithstanding their swerving from Him in some things. Their own ministers they highly magnified as men whose vocation was from God; the rest their manner was to term disdainfully Scribes and Pharisees, to account their calling an humane creature, and to detain the people as much as might be from hearing them. As touching Sacraments—Baptism administered in the Church of Rome—they judged to be but an execrable mockery, and no baptism, both because the ministers thereof in the papacy are wicked idolaters, lewd persons, thieves, and murderers, cursed creatures, ignorant beasts; and also for that to baptize is a proper action belonging unto none but the Church of Christ, whereas Rome is Antichrist's synagogue. The custom of using godfathers and godmothers at christenings they scorned. Baptizing of infants, although confessed by themselves to have been continued even since the very apostles' own times, yet they altogether condemned, partly because sundry errors are of no less antiquity, and partly for that there is no commandment in the Gospel of Christ, which sayeth, "Baptize infants," but be contrariwise in saying, "Go preach and baptize," doth appoint that the minister of baptism shall in that action first administer doctrine, and then baptism, as also in saying, "Whosoever doth believe and is baptized," he appointeth that the party to whom baptism is administered shall first believe, and then be baptized; to the end that believing may go before this sacrament in the receiver, no otherwise than preaching in the giver, since equally in both, the law of Christ declareth not only what things are required, but also in what order they are required.

The Eucharist they received (pretending our Lord and Saviour's example) after supper ; and for avoiding all those impieties which have been grounded upon the mystical words of Christ, " This is my body, This is my blood," they thought it not safe to mention either body or blood in that sacrament, but rather to abrogate both, and to use no words but these, " Take, eat, declare the death of our Lord ; drink, show forth our Lord's death." In rites and ceremonies their profession was hatred of all conformity with the Church of Rome ; for which cause they would rather endure any torment than observe the solemn festivals which others did, inasmuch as Antichrist (they said) was the first inventor of them. The pretended end of their civil reformation, was that Christ might have dominion over all, that all crowns and sceptres might be thrown down at His feet, that no other might reign over Christian men but He, no regiment keep them in awe but His discipline ; amongst them no sword at all be carried besides His—the sword of spiritual excommunication. For this cause they laboured with all their might in overturning the seats of magistracy, because Christ hath said, " Kings of Nations ;" in abolishing the execution of justice, because Christ has said, " Resist not evil ;" in forbidding oaths, the necessary means of judicial trial, because Christ has said, Swear not at all ; finally, in bringing in community of goods, because Christ by his apostles hath given the world such example to the end that men might excel one another, not in wealth the pillar of secular authority, but in virtue. These men at the first were only pitied in their error, and not much withstood by any ; the great humility, zeal, and devotion which appeared to be in them, was in all men's opinion a pledge of their harmless meaning. The hardest that men of sound understanding conceived of them was but this, " O quam honesta voluntate miseri erant ? " With how good a meaning these poor souls do evil. Luther made request unto Frederick Duke of Saxony, that within his dominion they might be favourably dealt with and spared, for that (their error exempted) they seemed otherwise right good men ; by means of which merciful toleration they gathered strength, much more than was safe for the state of the commonwealth wherein they lived. They had their secret corner-meetings and assemblies in the night ; the people flocked unto them by thousands. The means whereby they both allured and retained so great

multitudes were most effectual ;—First, a wonderful show of zeal towards God, wherewith they seemed to be even rapt in everything they spake ; secondly, a hatred of sin, and a singular love of integrity, which men did think to be much more than ordinary in them, by reason of the custom which they had to fill the ears of the people with invectives against their authorized guides as well spiritual as civil ; thirdly, the bountiful relief wherewith they eased the broken estate of such needy creatures as were in that respect the more apt to be drawn away ; fourthly, a tender compassion which they were thought to take upon the miseries of the common sort, over whose heads their manner was even to pour down showers of tears in complaining that no respect was had unto them, that their goods were devoured by wicked cormorants, their persons had in contempt, all liberty both temporal and spiritual taken from them, that it was high time for God now to hear their groans, and to send them deliverance : lastly, a cunning slight which they had to stroke and smooth-up the minds of their followers, as well by appropriating unto them all the favourable titles, the good words, and the gracious promises in Scripture ; as also by casting the contrary always on the heads of such as were severed from that retinue. Whereupon, the people's common acclamation unto such deceivers was—These are verily the men of God ; these are His true and sincere prophets ; if any such prophet or man of God did suffer by order of law condign and deserved punishment ; were it for felony, rebellion, murder, or what else, the people (so strangely were their hearts enchanted), as though blessed Saint Stephen had been again martyred, did lament that God took away His most dear servants from them. In all these things being fully persuaded, that what they did, it was obedience to the will of God, and that all men should do the like, there remained after speculation practice, whereby the whole world thereunto (if it were possible) might be framed. This they saw could not be done, but with mighty opposition and resistance ; against which to strengthen themselves, they secretly entered into a league of association. And peradventure considering, that although they were many, yet long wars would in time waste them out, they began to think whether it might not be that God would have them do for their speedy and mighty increase—the same which sometime God's own chosen people, the people of Israel did. Glad

and fain they were to have it so: which very desire was itself apt to breed both an opinion of possibility, and a willingness to gather arguments of likelihood that so God himself would have it. Nothing more clear unto their seeming, than that a New Jerusalem being often spoken of in Scripture, they undoubtedly were themselves that New Jerusalem, and the old did by way of a certain figurative resemblance signify what they should both be and do. Here they drew in a sea of matter, by applying all things unto their own company, which are anywhere spoken concerning divine favours and benefits bestowed upon the old commonwealth of Israel; concluding that as Israel was delivered out of Egypt, so they spiritually out of the Egypt of this world's servile thralldom unto sin and superstition. As Israel was to root out the idolatrous nations, and to plant instead of them a people which feared God, so the same Lord's goodwill and pleasure was now, that these new Israelites should, under the conduct of other Joshuas, Samsons, and Gideons, perform a work no less miraculous in casting-out violently the wicked from the earth, and establishing the kingdom of Christ with perfect liberty; and therefore as the cause why the children of Israel took unto one man many wives, might be lest the casualties of war should any way hinder the promise of God concerning their multitude from taking effect in them; so it was not unlike that for the necessary propagation of Christ's Kingdom under the Gospel, the Lord was content to allow as much. Now, whatsoever they did in such sort collect out of Scripture, when they came to justify or persuade it unto others, all was the Heavenly Father's appointment, his commandment, his will and charge. Which thing is the very point, in regard whereof I have gathered this declaration. For my purpose herein is to show, that when the minds of men are once erroneously persuaded, that it is the will of God to have those things done which they fancy, their opinions are as thorns in their sides, never suffering them to take rest till they have brought their speculations into practice—the lets and impediments of which practice their restless desire and study to remove, leadeth them every day forth by the hand into other more dangerous opinions, sometimes quite and clean contrary to their first pretended meanings; so as what will grow out of such errors as go masked under the cloak of divine authority—impossible it is that ever the wit of man should imagine—till time have brought forth the

fruits of them ; for which cause it behoveth wisdom to fear the sequels thereof, even beyond all apparent cause of fear. These men in whose mouths, at the first, sounded nothing but only mortification of the flesh, were come at the length to think they might lawfully have their six or seven wives apiece ; they which at the first thought judgment and justice itself to be merciless cruelty, accounted at the length their own hands sanctified with being imbrued in Christian blood ; —they who at the first were wont to beat down all dominion, and to urge against poor constables, kings of nations, had at the length both consuls and kings of their own erection amongst themselves. Finally, they which could not brook at the first that any man should seek, no, not by law, the recovery of goods injuriously taken or withheld from him, were grown at the last to think they could not offer unto God more acceptable sacrifice than by turning their adversaries clean out of house and home, and by enriching themselves with all kind of spoil and pillage, which thing being laid to their charge they had in a readiness their answer, that now the time was come when, according to our Saviour's promise, the meek ones must inherit the earth, and that their title hereunto was the same which the righteous Israelites had unto the goods of the wicked Egyptians. Wherefore, since the world hath had in these men so fresh experience how dangerous such active errors are, it must not offend you though touching the sequel of your present mispersuasions much more be doubted than your own intents and purposes do happily aim at. And yet your words already are somewhat, when ye affirm that your pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons ought to be in this Church of England whether Her Majesty and our State will or no. When for the animating of your confederates ye publish the musters which ye have made of your own bands, and proclaim them to amount I know not to how many thousands ; when ye threaten that since neither your suits to the Parliament, nor supplications to our Convocation House, neither your defences by writing, nor challenges of disputation in behalf of that cause are able to prevail, we must blame ourselves if to bring in discipline some such means hereafter be used as shall cause all our hearts to ache. That things doubtful are to be considered in the better part, is a principle not safe to be followed in matters concerning the public state of a commonwealth. But how-

soever these and the like speeches be accounted as arrows idly shot at random, without either eye had to any mark, or regard to their lighting-place, hath not your longing desire for the practice of your discipline brought the matter already unto this demurrer amongst you, whether the people and their godly pastors that way affected ought not to make separation from the rest, and to begin the exercise of discipline without the licence of civil powers, which licence they have sought for and are not heard? Upon which question, as ye have now divided yourselves, the warier sort of you taking the one part, and the forwarder in zeal the other, so in case these earnest ones should prevail, what other sequel can any wise man imagine but this, that having first resolved that attempts for discipline without superiors are lawful, it will follow in the next place to be disputed what may be attempted against superiors which will not have the sceptre of that discipline to rule over them. Yea, even by you which have stayed yourselves from running headlong with the other sort, somewhat, notwithstanding, there hath been done without the leave or liking of your lawful superiors for the exercise of a part of your discipline amongst the clergy thereunto addicted. And lest examination of principal parties therein should bring those things to light which might hinder and let your proceedings, behold for a bar against that impediment one opinion ye have newly added unto the rest, even upon this occasion, an opinion to exempt you from taking oaths, which may turn to the molestation of your brethren in that cause. The next neighbour opinion whereunto, when occasion requireth, may follow for dispensation with oaths already taken, if they afterwards be found to import a necessity of detecting ought which may bring such good men into trouble and damage, whatsoever the cause be. O merciful God! what man's wit is there able to sound the depth of those dangerous and fearful evils, whereinto our weak and impotent nature is inclinable to sink itself rather than to show an acknowledgment of error in that which once we have unadvisedly taken upon us to defend against the stream, as it were, of a contrary public resolution? Wherefore, if we anything respect their error, who, being persuaded even as ye are, have gone further upon that persuasion than ye allow, if we regard the present state of the highest governor placed over us, if the quality and disposition of our nobles, if the orders and laws of our

famous universities, if the profession of the civil, or the practice of the common law amongst us, if the mischiefs whereinto, even before our eyes, so many others have fallen headlong from no less plausible and fair beginnings than yours are: there is in every of these considerations most just cause to fear, lest our hastiness to embrace a thing of so perilous consequence should cause posterity to feel those evils which as yet are more easy for us to prevent than they would be for them to remedy.

9. The best and safest way for you, therefore, my dear brethren, is to all your deeds past to a new reckoning, to re-examine the cause ye have taken in hand, and to try it even point by point, argument by argument, with all the diligent exactness ye can, to lay aside the gall of that bitterness wherein your minds have hitherto over-abounded, and with meekness to search the truth. Think, ye are men, deem it not impossible for you to err; sift impartially your own hearts whether it be force of reason or vehemence of affection which hath bred, and still doth feed these opinions in you. If truth do anywhere manifest itself seek not to smother it with glossing delusion, acknowledge the greatness thereof, and think it your best victory when the same doth prevail over you.

That ye have been earnest in speaking or writing again and again the contrary way should be no blemish or discredit at all unto you. Amongst so many so huge volumes as the infinite pains of St. Augustine have brought forth, what one hath gotten him greater love, commendation and honour than the book wherein he carefully collecteth his own oversights and sincerely condemneth them? Many speeches there are of Job, whereby his wisdom and other virtues may appear, but the glory of an ingenuous mind he hath purchased by these words only, "Behold I will lay mine hand on my mouth; I have spoken once, yet will I not therefore maintain argument; yea, twice, howbeit for that cause further I will not proceed." Far more comfort it were for us, so small is the joy we take in these strifes, to labour under the same yoke, as men that look for the same eternal reward of their labours, to be enjoyed with you in bands of indissoluble love and amity, to live as if our persons being many our souls were but one, rather in such dismembered *sort to spend* our few and wretched days in a tedious *prosecuting of* wearisome contentions, the end whereof, if

51
8
49

they have not some speedy end, will be heavy even on both sides. Brought already we are even to that estate which Gregory Nazianzen mournfully describeth, saying :

"My mind leadeth me (since there is no other remedy) to fly and to convey myself into some corner out of sight, where I may escape from this cloudy tempest of maliciousness, whereby all parts are entered into a deadly war amongst themselves, and that little remnant of love which was is now consumed to nothing. The only godliness we glory in is to find out somewhat whereby we may judge others to be ungodly. Each other's faults we observe as matter of exprobatation and not of grief. By these means we are grown hateful in the eyes of the heathens themselves, and (which woundeth us the more deeply) able we are not to deny but that we have deserved their hatred. With the better sort of our own our fame and credit is clean lost. The less we are to marvel if they judge vilely of us, who although we did well would hardly allow thereof. On our backs they also build that are lewd, and what we object one against another the same they use to the utter scorn and disgrace of us all. This we have gained by our mutual home dissensions. This we are worthily rewarded with, which are more forward to strive than becometh men of virtuous and mild disposition." But our trust in the Almighty is that with us contentions are now at their highest float, and that the day will come (for what cause of despair is there) when the passions of former enmity being allayed, we shall with ten times redoubled tokens of our unfeignedly reconciled love show ourselves each towards other the same, which Joseph and the brethren of Joseph were at the time of their interview in Egypt. Our comfortable expectation and most thirsty desire, whereof what man soever amongst you shall anyway help to satisfy (as we truly hope there is no one amongst you but some way or other will) the blessings of the God of peace, both in this world and in the world to come, be upon him more than the stars of the firmament in number.

The First Book.

1. The cause of writing this general discourse concerning laws.
2. Of that law which God from before the beginning hath set for Himself to do all things by.
3. The law which natural agents observe, and their necessary manner of keeping it.
4. The law which the Angels of God obey.
5. The law whereby man is in his actions directed to the imitation of God.
6. Men's first beginning to understand that law.
7. Of man's will, which is the first thing that laws of action are made to guide.
8. Of the natural finding out of laws by the light of reason to guide the will unto that which is good.
9. Of the benefit of keeping that law which reason teacheth.
10. How reason doth lead men unto the making of human laws whereby politic societies are governed, and to agreement about laws whereby the fellowship or communion of independent societies standeth.
11. Wherefore God hath by Scripture further made known such supernatural laws as do serve for men's direction.
12. The cause why so many natural or rational laws are set down in Holy Scripture.
13. The benefit of having divine laws written.
14. The sufficiency of Scripture unto the end for which it was instituted.
15. Of laws positive contained in Scripture, the mutability of certain of them, and the general use of Scripture.
16. A conclusion, showing how all this belongeth to the cause in question.

HE that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers, because they know the manifold defects whereunto every kind of regiment is subject, but the secret lets and difficulties, which in public proceedings are innumerable and inevitable, they have not ordinarily the judgment to consider. And because such as openly reprove supposed disorders of state are taken for principal friends to the common benefit of all, and for men that carry singular freedom of mind, under this fair and plausible colour, whatsoever they utter passes for good and current. That which wanteth in the weight of their speech is supplied by the aptness of men's minds to accept and believe it. Whereas, on the other side, if we maintain things that are established, we have not only to strive with a number of heavy prejudices deeply rooted in the hearts of men who think that herein we serve the time, and speak in

favour of the present state, because thereby we either hold or seek preferment; but also to bear such exceptions as minds so averted beforehand usually take against that which they are loth should be poured into them. Albeit, therefore, much of that we are to speak in this present cause may seem to a number perhaps tedious, perhaps obscure, dark, and intricate (for many talk of the truth which never sounded the depth from whence it springeth, and, therefore, when they are led thereunto they are soon weary, as men drawn from those beaten paths wherewith they have been inured), yet this may not so far prevail as to cut off that which the matter itself requireth, howsoever the nice humour of some be therewith pleased or no. They unto whom we shall seem tedious, are in no wise injured by us, because it is in their own hands to spare that labour which they are not willing to endure. And if any complain of obscurity, they must consider that in these matters it cometh no otherwise to pass, than in sundry the works both of art and also of nature, where that which hath greatest force in the very things we see, is, notwithstanding, itself oftentimes not seen. The stateliness of houses, the goodliness of trees, when we behold them delighteth the eye, but that foundation which beareth up the one, that root which ministereth unto the other nourishment and life, is in the bosom of the earth concealed; and if there be at any time occasion to search into it, such labour is then more necessary than pleasant, both to them which undertake it, and for the lookers-on. In like manner the use and benefit of good laws, all that live under them may enjoy with delight and comfort, albeit the grounds and first original causes from whence they have sprung be unknown as to the greatest part of men they are. But when they who withdraw their obedience, pretend that the laws which they should obey are corrupt and vicious, for better examination of their quality, it behoveth the very foundation and root, the highest well-spring and fountain of them to be discovered. Which, because we are not oftentimes accustomed to do, when we do it the pains we take are more needful a great deal than acceptable, and the matters which we handle seem, by reason of newness (till the mind grow better acquainted with them), dark, intricate, and unfamiliar. For as much help whereof as may be in this case, I have endeavoured throughout the body of this whole discourse, that every former part might give

strength unto all that follow, and every later bring some light unto all before. So that if the judgments of men do but hold themselves in suspense as touching these first more general meditations, till in order they have perused the rest that ensue, what may seem dark at the first will afterwards be found more plain even as the latter particular decisions will appear, I doubt not, more strong when the other have been read before. The laws of the Church, whereby for so many ages together we have been guided in the exercise of Christian religion and the service of the true God, our rites, customs, and orders of ecclesiastical government, are called in question; we are accused as men that will not have Christ Jesus to rule over them, but have wilfully cast His statutes behind their backs, hating to be reformed, and made subject unto the sceptre of His discipline. Behold, therefore, we offer the laws whereby we live unto the general trial and judgment of the whole world, heartily beseeching Almighty God, whom we desire to serve according to His own will, that both we and others (all kind of partial affection being clean laid aside) may have eyes to see, and hearts to embrace the things that in His sight are most acceptable. And because the point about which we strive is the quality of our laws, our first entrance hereinto cannot better be made than with consideration of the nature of law in general, and of that law which giveth life unto all the rest which are commendable, just, and good, namely, the law whereby the Eternal Himself doth work. Proceeding from hence to the law, first of nature, then of Scripture, we shall have the easier access unto those things which come after to be debated, concerning the particular cause and question which we have in hand.

2. All things that are, have some operation not violent or casual. Neither doth anything ever begin to exercise the same without some foreconceived end for which it worketh. And the end which it worketh for is not obtained unless the work be also fit to obtain it by. For unto every end every operation will not serve. That which doth assign unto each thing the kind, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working the same, we term a law. So that no certain end could ever be attained unless the actions whereby it is attained were regular, that is to say, made suitable, fit, and correspondent unto their end by some

canon rule or law. Which thing doth first take place in the works even of God himself. All things therefore do work after a sort according to law; all other things according to a law whereof some superiors unto whom they are subject is author; only the works and operations of God have Him both for their worker and for the law whereby they are wrought. The being of God is a kind of law to His working; for that perfection which God is, giveth perfection to that He doth. Those natural, necessary, and internal operations of God, the generation of the Son, the proceeding of the Spirit, are without the compass of my present intent, which is to touch only such operations as have their beginning and being by a voluntary purpose, wherewith God hath eternally decreed when and how they should be. Which eternal decree is that we term an eternal law. (Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His name, yet our soundest knowledge is, to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him; and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence when we confess without confession that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above and we upon earth, therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few. Our God is One, or, rather, very Oneness, and mere unity having nothing but itself in itself, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things. In which essential unity of God, a Trinity personal nevertheless subsisteth, after a manner far exceeding the possibility of man's conceit. The works which outwardly are of God, they are in such sort of Him being one that each person hath in them somewhat peculiar and proper. For, being three, and they all subsisting in the essence of one deity, from the Father by the Son through the Spirit all things are. That which the Son doth here of the Father, and which the Spirit doth receive of the Father and the Son, the same we have at the hands of the Spirit, as being the last and therefore the nearest unto us in order, although in power the same with the second and the first. The wise and learned, among the very heathens themselves, have all acknowledged some first cause, whereupon originally the being of all things dependeth. Neither have they otherwise spoken of that cause than as an agent, which, knowing what and why it worketh, obser-

veth in working a most exact order or law. Thus much is signified by that which Homer mentioneth Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή. Thus much acknowledged by Mercurius Trismegistus. Τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργὸς οὐ χερσίν, ἀλλὰ λόγῳ. Thus much confessed by Anaxagoras and Plato, terming the Maker of the world an Intellectual Worker. Finally, the Stoics, although imagining the first cause of all things to be fire, held nevertheless that the same fire having art, did ὁδῷ βαδίζειν ἐπὶ γενέσει κόσμου. They all confess, therefore, in the working of that first cause, that counsel is used, reason followed, a way observed, that is to say, constant order and law is kept whereof itself must needs be author unto itself. Otherwise it should have some worthier and higher to direct it, and so could not itself be the first. Being the first, it can have no other than itself to be the author of that law which it willingly worketh by. God, therefore, is a law both to Himself and to all other things besides. To Himself He is a law in all those things whereof our Saviour speaketh, saying, "My Father worketh as yet, so I." God worketh nothing without cause. All those things which are done by Him, have some end for which they are done; and the end for which they are done is a reason of His will to do them. His will had not inclined to create woman, but that He saw it could not be well if she were not created. *Non est bonum*, "It is not good man should be alone." Therefore, let us make an helper for him. That and nothing else is done by God, which to leave undone were not so good. If, therefore, it be demanded why God, having power and ability infinite, the effects notwithstanding of that power are all so limited as we see they are: the reason hereof is, the end which He hath proposed, and the law whereby His wisdom hath stinted the effects of His power in such sort that it doth not work infinitely but correspondently unto that end for which it worketh, even all things χρηστῶς, in most decent and comely sort, all things in measure, number and weight. "The general end of God's external working is the exercise of His most glorious and most abundant virtue, which abundance doth show itself in variety, and for that cause this variety is oftentimes in Scripture expressed by the name of riches. The Lord hath made all things for His own sake. Not that anything is made to be beneficial unto Him, but all things for Him

to show beneficence and grace in them. The particular drift of every act proceeding externally from God we are not able to discern, and therefore cannot always give the proper and certain reason of His works. Howbeit, undoubtedly a proper and certain reason there is of every finite work of God, inasmuch as there is a law imposed upon it, which if there were not it should be infinite, even as the worker Himself is. They err, therefore, who think that of the will of God to do this or that there is no reason besides His will. Many times no reason known to us; but that there is no reason thereof I judge it most unreasonable to imagine, inasmuch as He worketh all things *κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*, not only according to His own will, but the counsel of His own will. And whatsoever is done with counsel or wise resolution hath of necessity some reason why it should be done, albeit that reason be to us in some things so secret that it forceth the wit of man to stand, as the blessed Apostle himself doth, amazed thereat. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments!" &c. That law eternal which God himself hath made to Himself, and thereby worketh all things whereof He is the cause and author; that law in the admirable frame whereof shineth with most perfect beauty the countenance of that wisdom which hath testified concerning herself, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, even before His works of old I was set up;" that law which hath been the pattern to make and is the card to guide the world by; that law which hath been of God and with God everlastingly; that law the author and observer whereof is one only God to be blessed for ever—how should either men or angels be able perfectly to behold? The book of this law we are neither able nor worthy to open and look into. That little thereof which we darkly apprehend we admire; the rest, with religious ignorance, we humbly and meekly adore. Seeing, therefore, that according to this law He worketh of whom, through whom, and for whom are all things, although there seem unto us confusion and disorder in the affairs of this present world—*Tamen quoniam bonus mundum rector temperat, rectè fieri cuncta ne dubites*—Let no man doubt but that everything is well done, because the world is ruled by so good a guide, as transgresseth not His own law, than which nothing can

be more absolute, perfect, and just. The law whereby He worketh is eternal, and therefore can have no show or colour of mutability; for which cause a part of that law being opened in the promises which God hath made (because His promises are nothing else but declarations what God will do for the good of men), touching those promises the Apostle hath witnessed, that God may as possibly deny Himself and not be God as fail to perform them. And concerning the counsel of God, he termeth it likewise a thing unchangeable; the counsel of God, and that law of God whereof now we speak, being one. Nor is the freedom of the will of God any whit abated, let, or hindered by means of this, because the imposition of this law upon Himself is His own free and voluntary act. This law, therefore, we may name eternal, being that order which God before all ages hath set down with Himself for Himself to do all things by.

3. I am not ignorant that by law eternal the learned for the most part do understand the order, not which God hath eternally purposed Himself in all His works to observe, but rather that which with Himself He hath set down as expedient to be kept by all His creatures according to the several condition wherewith He hath endued them. They who thus are accustomed to speak apply the name of law unto that only rule of working which superior authority imposeth, whereas we, somewhat more enlarging the sense thereof, term any kind of rule or canon whereby actions are framed a law. Now that law which, as it is laid up in the bosom of God, they call eternal, receiveth, according unto the different kind of things which are subject unto it, different and sundry kinds of names. That part of it which ordereth natural agents we call usually Nature's law; that which angels do clearly behold, and without any swerving observe, is a law celestial and heavenly. The law of reason, that which bindeth creatures reasonable in this world, and with which by reason they may most plainly perceive themselves bound; that which bindeth them, and is not known but by special revelation from God, Divine law; human law, that which out of the law either of reason or of God, men probably gathering to be expedient, they make it a law. All things, therefore, which are as they ought to be are conformed unto this second law eternal, and even those *things which to this eternal law are not conformable* are

notwithstanding in some sort ordered by the first eternal law. For what good or evil is there under the sun, what ~~action~~ correspondent or repugnant unto the law which God hath imposed upon His creatures, but in or upon it God doth work according to the law which Himself hath eternally purposed to keep, that is to say, the first law eternal? So that a two-fold law eternal being thus made, it is not hard to conceive how they both take place in all things. Wherefore to come to the law of nature, albeit thereby we sometimes mean that manner of working which God hath set for each created thing to keep; yet, forasmuch as those things are termed most properly natural agents which keep the law of their kind unwittingly, as the heavens and elements of the world, which can do no otherwise than they do; and forasmuch as we give unto intellectual natures the name of voluntary agents, that so we may distinguish them from the other; expedient it will be that we sever the law of nature observed by the one from that which the other is tied unto. Touching the former, their strict keeping of one tenure, statute and law is spoken of by all, but hath in it more than men have as yet attained to know, or perhaps ever shall attain, seeing the travail of wading herein is given of God to the sons of men, that perceiving how much the least thing in the world hath in it more than the wisest are able to reach unto, they may by this means learn humility. Moses, in describing the work of creation, attributeth speech unto God: "God said, Let there be light; let there be a firmament; let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place; let the earth bring forth; let there be lights in the firmament of heaven." Was this only the intent of Moses, to signify the infinite greatness of God's power by the easiness of His accomplishing such effects without travail, pain, or labour? Surely it seemeth that Moses had herein besides this a further purpose, namely, first to teach that God did not work as a necessary but a voluntary agent, intending beforehand and decreeing with Himself that which did outwardly proceed from Him; secondly, to show that God did then institute a law natural to be observed by creatures, and therefore, according to the manner of laws, the institution thereof is described as being established by solemn injunction. His commanding those things to be which are, and to be in such sort as they are, to keep that tenure and

course which they do, importeth the establishment of nature's law. [This world's first creation, and the preservation since of things created, what is it but only so far forth a manifestation by execution what the eternal law of God is concerning things natural? And as it cometh to pass in a kingdom rightly ordered, that after a law is once published it presently takes effect far and wide, all states framing themselves thereunto, even so let us think it fareth in the natural course of the world. (Since the time that God did first proclaim the edicts of His law upon it, heaven and earth have harkened unto His voice, and their labour hath been to do His will. He made a law for the rain, He gave His decree unto the sea that the waters should not pass His commandment. Now if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world whereof all things in this lower world are made should lose the qualities which now they have; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should as it were, through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mother, no longer able to yield them relief—what would become of man himself whom these things now do all serve? See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world? Notwithstanding, with nature it cometh sometimes to pass as with art. Let Phidias have rude and obstinate stuff to carve, though his art do that it should, his work will lack that beauty which otherwise in fitter matter it might have had. He that striketh an instrument with skill may cause notwithstanding a very unpleasant sound if the string whereon he striketh chance to be incapable of harmony. In the matter whereof things natural consist, that, of Theophrastus taketh place, πολλὴ τὸ οὐχ ἱπακοῦον, ὅμωδὲ

δεχόμενον, much of it is oftentimes such as will by no means yield to receive that impression which were best and most perfect. Which defect in the matter of things natural they who gave themselves unto the contemplation of nature amongst the heathen observed often; but the true original cause thereof, Divine malediction, laid for the sin of man upon these creatures which God hath made for the use of man; this being an article of that saving truth which God hath revealed unto His Church, was above the reach of their merely natural capacity and understanding. But howsoever these swervings are now and then incident into the course of nature, nevertheless so constantly the laws of nature are by natural agents observed that no man denieth but those things which nature worketh are wrought either always or for the most part after one and the same manner. If here it be demanded what that is which keepeth nature in obedience to her own law, we must have recourse to that higher law whereof we have already spoken, and because all other laws do thereon depend, from thence we must borrow so much as shall need for brief resolution in this point. Although we are not of opinion, therefore, as some are, that nature in working hath before her certain exemplary draughts or patterns, which, subsisting in the bosom of the Highest, and being thence discovered, she fixeth her eye upon them, as travellers by sea upon the pole-star of the world, and that according thereunto she guideth her hand to work by imitation; although we rather embrace the oracle of Hippocrates, that each thing, both in small and in great, fulfilleth the task which destiny hath set down, and concerning the manner of executing and fulfilling the same, what they do they know not, yet is it in show and appearance as though they did know what they do, and the truth is they do not discern the things which they look on; nevertheless, forasmuch as the works of nature are no less exact than if she did both behold and study how to express some absolute shape or mirror always present before her; yea, such her dexterity and skill appeareth that no intellectual creature in the world were able by capacity to do that which nature doth without capacity and knowledge—it cannot be but nature hath some director of infinite knowledge to guide her in all her ways. Who the guide of nature but only the God of nature? In Him *we live, move, and are.* Those things which nature is said

to do are by Divine art performed, using nature as an instrument; nor is there any such art or knowledge Divine in nature herself working, but in the guide of nature's work. Whereas, therefore, things natural which are not in the number of voluntary agents (for of such only we now speak, and of no other) do so necessarily observe their certain laws, that as long as they keep those forms which give them their being they cannot possibly be apt or inclinable to do otherwise than they do, seeing the kinds of their operations are both constantly and exactly framed according to the several ends for which they serve, they themselves in the meanwhile, though doing that which is fit, yet knowing neither what they do nor why; it followeth that all which they do in this sort proceedeth originally from some such agent as knoweth, appointeth, holdeth up, and even actually frameth the same. (The manner of this Divine efficiency being far above us, we are no more able to conceive by our reason than creatures unreasonable by their sense are able to apprehend after what manner we dispose and order the course of our affairs.) Only this much is discerned, that the natural generation and process of all things receiveth order of proceeding from the settled stability of Divine understanding. This appointeth unto them their kinds of working, the disposition whereof in the purity of God's own knowledge and will is rightly termed by the name of Providence. The same being referred unto the things themselves here disposed by it, was wont by the ancient to be called natural destiny. That law the performance whereof we behold in things natural, is as it were an authentical or an original draught written in the bosom of God himself; whose spirit being to execute the same, useth every particular nature, every mere natural agent, only as an instrument created at the beginning, and ever since the beginning used to work His own will and pleasure withal. Nature, therefore, is nothing else but God's instrument, in the course whereof Dionysius, perceiving some sudden disturbance, is said to have cried out, *Aut Deus naturæ patitur, aut mundi machina dissolvitur*, either God doth suffer impediment and is by a greater than Himself hindered, or, if that be impossible, then hath He determined to make a present dissolution of the world, the execution of that law beginning now to stand still, without which the world cannot stand. This workman, whose servitor nature

is, being in truth but only one, the heathens imagining to be more, gave him in the sky the name of Jupiter, in the air the name of Juno, in the water the name of Neptune, in the earth the name of Vesta, and sometimes of Ceres, the name of Apollo in the sun, in the moon the name of Diana, the name of Acolus and divers others in the winds ; and, to conclude, even so many guides of nature they dreamed of as they saw there were kinds of things natural in the world. These they honoured as having power to work or cease accordingly as men deserved of them. But unto us there is one only guide of all agents natural, and He both the creator and the worker of all in all, alone to be blessed, adored, and honoured by all for ever. That which hitherto hath been spoken, concerneth natural agents considered in themselves. But we must further remember also (which thing to touch in a word shall suffice) that as in this respect they have their law, which law directeth them in the means whereby they tend to their own perfection. So likewise another law there is which toucheth them as they are sociable parts united into one body, a law which bindeth them each to serve unto others' good, and all to prefer the good of the whole before whatsoever their own particular, as we plainly see they do when things natural in that regard forget their ordinary natural wont, that which is heavy mounting sometimes upwards of its own accord, and forsaking the centre of the earth, which to itself is most natural, even as if it did hear itself commanded to let go the good it privately wisheth, and to relieve the present distress of nature in common.

4. But now that we may lift up our eyes, as it were, from the footstool to the throne of God, and leaving these natural consider a little the state of heavenly and divine creatures : touching angels, which are spirits immaterial and intellectual, the glorious inhabitants of those sacred palaces, where nothing but light and blessed immortality, no shadow of matter for tears, discontentments, griefs, and uncomfortable passions to work upon, but all joy, tranquillity, and peace, even for ever and ever doth dwell, as in number and order they are huge, mighty, and royal armies ; so likewise in perfection of obedience unto that law, which the Highest whom they adore, love, and imitate, hath imposed upon them such observants they are thereof, that our Saviour himself being to set down the perfect idea of that which

we are to pray and wish for on earth, did not teach to pray or wish for more, than only that here it might be with us as with them it is in heaven. God which moveth mere natural agents as an efficient only, doth otherwise move intellectual creatures, and especially his Holy angels; for beholding the face of God, in admiration of so great excellency they all adore Him, and, being rapt with the love of His beauty, they cleave inseparably for ever unto Him. Desire to resemble Him in goodness, maketh them unwearable and even unsatiable in their longings, to do by all means all manner good unto all the creatures of God, but especially unto the children of men; in the countenance of whose nature looking downward they behold themselves beneath themselves, even as upward in God, beneath whom themselves are, they see that character which is nowhere but in themselves and us resembled. Thus far even the Paynims have approached, thus far they have seen into the doings of the angels of God; Orpheus confessing that the fiery throne of God is attended on by those most industrious angels, careful how all things are performed amongst men; and the mirror of human wisdom plainly teaching that God moveth angels, even as that thing doth stir man's heart, which is thereunto presented amiable.

Angelical actions may therefore be reduced unto these three general kinds: first, most delectable love arising from the visible apprehension of the purity, glory, and beauty of God, invisible saving only unto spirits that are pure; secondly, adoration, grounded upon the evidence of the greatness of God, on whom they see how all things depend; thirdly, imitation, bred by the presence of His exemplary goodness, who ceases not before them daily to fill heaven and earth with the rich treasures of most free and undeserved grace. Of angels we are not to consider only what they are, and do, in regard of their own being, but that also which concerneth them as they are linked into a kind of corporation amongst themselves, and of society or fellowship with men. Consider angels each of them severally in himself, and their law is that which the prophet David mentioneth, "All ye his angels praise him." Consider the angels of God associated, and their law is that which disposeth them as an army, one in order and *degree above another*. Consider finally the angels as *having with us that communion which the Apostle to the*

Hebrews noteth, and in regard whereof angels have not disdained to profess themselves our fellow-servants; from hence there springeth up a third law, which bindeth them to works of ministerial employment. Every of which their several functions are by them performed with joy. A part of the angels of God notwithstanding (we know) have fallen, and that their fall hath been through the voluntary breach of that law, which did require at their hands continuance in the exercise of their high and admirable virtue. Impossible it was that ever their will should change or incline to remit any part of their duty, without some object having force to avert their conceit from God and to draw it another way, and that, before they attained that high perfection of bliss wherein now the elect angels are without possibility of falling. Of anything more than of God they could not by any means like, as long as whatsoever they knew besides God they apprehended it not in itself without dependency upon God; because so long God must needs seem infinitely better than anything which they so could apprehend. Things beneath them could not in such sort be presented unto their eyes, but that therein they must needs see always how those things did depend on God. It seemeth, therefore, that there was no other way for angels to sin but by reflex of their understanding upon themselves, when, being held with admiration of their own sublimity and honour, the memory of their subordination unto God, and their dependency on Him, was drowned in this conceit; whereupon their adoration, love, and imitation of God, could not choose but be also interrupted. The fall of angels, therefore, was pride. Since their fall their practices have been the clean contrary unto those before mentioned. For being dispersed some in the air, some on the earth, some in the water, some amongst the minerals, dens, and caves that are under the earth, they have by all means laboured to effect an universal rebellion against the laws, and, as far as in them lieth, utter destruction of the works of God. These wicked spirits the heathens honoured instead of gods, both generally under the name of *Dæi inferi*, gods infernal; and particularly some in oracles, some in idols, some as household gods, some as nymphs; in a word, no foul and wicked spirit which was *not one way or other honoured of men as God, till such*

time as light appeared in the world and dissolved the works of the devil. Thus much, therefore, may suffice for angels, the next unto whom in degree are men.

5. God alone excepted, who actually and everlastingly is whatsoever He may be, and which cannot hereafter be that which now He is not, all other things besides are somewhat in possibility which as yet they are not in act. And for this cause there is in all things an appetite, or desire, whereby they incline to something which they may be, and, when they are it, they shall be more perfect than now they are. All which perfections are contained under the general name of goodness. And because there is not in the world anything whereby another may not some way be made the more perfect, therefore all things that are, are good. Again, since there can be no goodness desired which proceedeth not from God himself, as from the supreme cause of all things, and every effect doth after a sort contain, at leastwise resemble, the cause from which it proceedeth; all things in the world are said in some sort to seek the highest, and to covet more or less the participation of God himself. Yet this doth nowhere so much appear as it doth in man, because there are so many kinds of perfections which man seeketh. The first degree of goodness is that general perfection which all things do seek, in desiring the continuance of their being. All things, therefore, coveting as much as may be to be like unto God in being ever that which cannot hereunto attain personally, doth seek to continue itself another way, that is by offspring and propagation. The next degree of goodness is that which each thing coveteth by affecting resemblance with God in the constancy and excellency of those operations which belong unto their kind. The immutability of God they strive unto by working either always, or for the most part, after one and the same manner; His absolute exactness they imitate by attending unto that which is most exquisite in every particular. Hence have risen a number of axioms in philosophy, showing how "the works of nature do always aim at that which cannot be bettered." These two kinds of goodness rehearsed are so nearly united to the things themselves which desire them, that we scarcely perceive the appetite to stir in reaching forth her hand towards them. But the desire of those perfections which grow externally

is more apparent, especially of such as are not expressly desired unless they be first known, or such as are not for any other cause than for knowledge itself desired. Concerning perfections in this kind, that by proceeding in the knowledge of truth, and by growing in the exercise of virtue, man, amongst the creatures of this inferior world, aspireth to the greatest conformity with God; this is not only known unto us whom He himself hath so instructed, but even they do acknowledge who amongst men are not judged the nearest unto Him. With Plato what one thing more usual than to excite men unto the love of wisdom, by showing how much wise men are thereby exalted above men, how knowledge doth raise them up into heaven; how it maketh them, though not gods, yet as gods, high, admirable, and divine. And Mercurius Trismegistus, speaking of the virtues of a righteous soul, "such spirits," saith he, "are never cloyed with praising and speaking well of all men, with doing good unto every one by word and deed, because they study to frame themselves according to the pattern of the Father of spirits."

⑥ In the matter of knowledge there is between the angels of God and the children of men this difference: angels already have full and complete knowledge in the highest degree that can be imparted unto them; men, if we view them in their spring, are at the first without understanding or knowledge at all. Nevertheless from this utter vacuity they grow by degrees till they come at length to be even as the angels themselves are. That which agreeth to the one now the other shall attain unto in the end; they are not so far disjoined and severed but that they come at length to meet. "The soul of man being therefore at the first as a book wherein nothing is, and yet all things may be imprinted; we are to search by what steps and degrees it riseth unto perfection of knowledge." Unto that which hath been already set down concerning natural agents, this we must add, that albeit therein we have comprised as well creatures living as void of life, if they be in degree of nature beneath men, nevertheless a difference we must observe between those natural agents that work altogether unwittingly, and those which have, though weak, yet some understanding what they do, as fishes, fowls, and beasts have. Beasts are, in sensible capacity, as ripe even as men themselves, perhaps more ripe. For as stones

though in dignity of nature inferior unto plants, yet exceed them in firmness of strength or durability of being, and plants, though beneath the excellency of creatures endued with sense, yet exceed them in the faculty of vegetation and of fertility; so beasts, though otherwise behind men, may, notwithstanding, in actions of sense and fancy go beyond them, because the endeavours of Nature, when it hath an higher perfection to seek, are in lower the more remiss, not esteeming thereof so much as those things do which have no better proposed unto them. The soul of man, therefore, being capable of a more divine perfection hath (besides the faculties of growing unto sensible knowledge which is common unto us with beasts) a further ability, whereof in them there is no show at all, the ability of reaching higher than unto sensible things. Till we grow to some ripeness of years, the soul of man doth only store itself with conceits of things of inferior and more open quality, which afterwards do serve as instruments unto that which is greater: in the meanwhile above the reach of meaner creatures it ascendeth not. When once it comprehendeth anything above this, as the differences of time, affirmations, negations, and contradictions in speech; we then count it to have some use of natural reason. Whereunto if afterwards there might be added the right helps of true art and learning (which helps I must plainly confess this age of the world, carrying the name of a learned age, doth neither much know nor greatly regard), there would undoubtedly be almost as great difference in maturity of judgment between men therewith inured, and that which now men are, as between men that are now and innocents. Which speech if any condemn, as being over-hyperbolic, let them consider but this one thing. No art is at the first finding out so perfect as industry may after make it. Yet the very first man that to any purpose knew the way we speak of and followed it hath alone thereby performed more very near in all parts of natural knowledge, than since in any one part thereof, the whole world besides hath done. In the poverty of that other new devised aid, two things there are notwithstanding singular. Of marvellous quick despatch it is, and doth show them that have it as much almost in three days as if it dwell threescore years with them. Again because the curiosity of man's wit doth many times with peril

wade farther in the search of things than were convenient : the same is thereby restrained unto such generalities as everywhere offering themselves are apparent unto men of the weakest conceit that need be. So as following the rules and precepts thereof, we may find it to be, an art which teacheth the way of speedy discourse, and restraineth the mind of man that it may not wax overwise. Education and instruction are the means, the one by use, the other by precept, to make our natural faculty of reason both the better and the sooner able to judge rightly between truth and error, good and evil. But at what time a man may be said to have attained so far forth the use of reason as sufficeth to make him capable of those laws whereby he is then bound to guide his actions ; this is a great deal more easy for common sense to discern than for any man by skill and learning to determine, even as it is not in philosophers, who best know the nature both of fire and of gold, to teach what degree of the one will serve to purify the other so well as the artisan (who doth this by fire) discerneth by sense when the fire hath that degree of heat which sufficeth for his purpose.

7. By reason man attaineth unto the knowledge of things that are and are not sensible : It resteth, therefore, that we search how man attaineth unto the knowledge of such things unsensible, as are to be known that they may be done. Seeing then that nothing can move unless there be some end, the desire whereof provoketh unto motion, how should that divine power of the soul, that spirit of our mind as the Apostle termeth it, ever stir itself unto action unless it have also the like spur ? The end for which we are moved to work is sometimes the goodness which we conceive of the very working itself, without any further respect at all ; and the cause that procureth action is the mere desire of action, no other good besides being thereby intended. Of certain turbulent wits it is said, *Illis quæta movere magna merces videbatur*. They thought the very disturbance of things established an hire sufficient to set them on work. Sometimes that which we do is referred to a further end, without the desire whereof we would leave the same undone, as in their actions that gave alms to purchase thereby the praise of men. Man in perfection of nature, being made according to the likeness of his maker, resemblenth Him also in the manner of working ; so that whatsoever we work as

men, the same we do wittingly work and freely; neither are we according to the manner of natural agents any way so tied, but that it is in our power to leave the things we do undone. The good which either is gotten by doing, or which consisted in the very doing itself, causeth not action, unless, apprehending it as good, we so like and desire it. That we do unto any such end, the same we choose and prefer before the leaving of it undone. Choice there is not, unless the thing which we take be so in our power that we might have refused and left it. If fire consume the stubble it chooseth not so to do, because the nature thereof is such that it can do no other. To choose is to will one thing before another, and to will is to bend our souls to the having or doing of that which they see to be good. Goodness is seen with the eye of the understanding, and the light of that eye is reason. So that two principal fountains there are of human action, knowledge and will, which will in things tending towards any end is termed choice. Concerning knowledge, behold saith Moses, "I have set before you this day good and evil, life and death." Concerning will, he added immediately, "choose life;" that is to say, the things that tend unto life, them choose. But of one thing we must have special care, as being a matter of no small moment, and that is, how the will properly and strictly taken, as it is of things which are referred unto the end that man desireth, differeth greatly from that inferior natural desire which we call appetite. The object of appetite is whatsoever sensible good may be wished for; the object of will is that good which reason doth lead us to seek. Affections, as joy, and grief, and fear, and anger, with such like, being as it were the sundry fashions and forms of appetite, can neither rise at the conceit of a thing indifferent, nor yet choose but rise at the sight of some things. Wherefore it is not altogether in our power whether we will be stirred with affections or no; whereas actions which issue from the disposition of the will are in the power thereof to be performed or stayed. Finally, appetite is the will's solicitor, and the will is appetite's controller; what we covet according to the one, by the other we often reject: neither is any other desire termed properly will, but that where reason and understanding, or the show of reason, prescribeth the thing desired. It may be therefore a question whether those operations of men are to

counted voluntary, wherein that good which is sensible provoketh appetite, and appetite causeth action, reason being never called to counsel; as when we eat or drink, or betake ourselves unto rest, and such like. The truth is that such actions in men having attained to the use of reason are voluntary. For as the authority of higher powers hath force even in those things which are done without their privity, and are of so mean reckoning that to acquaint them therewith it needed not: in like sort voluntarily we are said to do that also, which the will if it listed might hinder from being done, although about the doing thereof we do not expressly use our reason or understanding and so immediately apply our wills thereunto. In cases, therefore, of such facility the will doth yield her assent, as it were, with a kind of silence, by not dissenting, in which respect her force is not so apparent as in express mandates or prohibitions, especially upon advice and consultation going before. Where understanding, therefore, needeth in those things, reason is the director of man's will, by discovering in action what is good. For the laws of well-doing are the dictates of right reason. Children which are not as yet come unto those years whereat they may have; again, innocents which are excluded by natural defect from ever having; thirdly, mad men which for the present cannot possibly have the use of right reason to guide themselves, have for their guide the reason that guideth other men, which are tutors over them to seek and to procure their good for them. In the rest there is that light of reason, whereby good may be known from evil, and which discovering the same rightly is termed right. The will notwithstanding doth not incline to have or do that which reason teacheth to be good, unless the same do also teach it to be possible. For albeit the appetite, being more general, may with anything which seemeth good, be it never so impossible: yet for such things the reasonable will of man doth never seek. Let reason teach impossibility in anything, and the will of man doth let it go; a thing impossible it doth not affect, the impossibility thereof being manifest. There is in the will of man naturally that freedom, whereby it is apt to take or refuse any particular object whatsoever being presented unto it. Whereupon it followeth, that there is no particular object so good, but it may have the show of some difficulty or unpleasant quality annexed to it, in respect

whereof the will may shrink and decline it: contrariwise (for so things are blended) there is no particular evil which hath not some appearance of goodness whereby to insinuate itself. For evil as evil cannot be desired: if that be desired which is evil, the cause is the goodness which is or seemeth to be joined with it. Goodness doth not move by being, but by being apparent, and therefore many things are neglected which are most precious only because the value of them lieth hid. [Sensible goodness is most apparent, near, and present which causeth the appetite to be therewith strongly provoked. Now pursuit and refusal in the will do follow, the one the affirmation, the other the negation, of goodness, which the understanding apprehendeth, grounding itself upon sense unless some higher reason do chance to teach the contrary. And if reason have taught it rightly to be good, yet not so apparently that the mind receiveth it with utter impossibility of being otherwise, still there is place left for the will to take or leave. Whereas, therefore, amongst so many things as are to be done there are so few the goodness whereof reason in such sort doth or easily can discover; we are not to marvel at the choice of evil, even then when the contrary is probably known.] Hereby it cometh to pass, that custom inuring the mind by long practice, and so leaving there a sensible impression, prevaileth more than reasonable persuasion what way soever. Reason, therefore, may rightly discern the thing which is good, and yet the will of man not incline itself thereunto as oft as the prejudice of sensible experience doth oversway. Nor let any man think that this doth make anything for the just excuse of iniquity. For there was never sin committed wherein a less good was not preferred before a greater, and that wilfully, which cannot be done without the singular disgrace of nature and the utter disturbance of that divine order whereby the pre-eminence of chiefest acceptation is by the best things worthily challenged. There is not that good which concerneth us, but it hath evidence enough for itself, if reason were diligent to search it out. Through neglect thereof, abused we are with the show of that which is not; sometimes the subtilty of Satan inveigling us, as it did Eve, sometimes the hastiness of our wills preventing the more considerate advice of sound reason, as in the Apostles, when they no sooner saw what they liked *not but they forthwith were desirous of fire from heaven: sometimes the very custom of evil making the heart obdurate.*

against whatsoever instructions to the contrary, as in them over whom our Saviour spake weeping, "O Jerusalem, how often, and thou wouldst not?" Still, therefore, that wherewith we stand blameable, and can no way excuse it is, "In doing evil, we prefer a less good before a greater, the greatness whereof is by reason investigable and may be known." The search of knowledge is a thing painful, and the painfulness of knowledge is that which maketh the will so hardly inclinable thereunto. The root hereof, divine malediction, whereby the instruments being weakened wherewithal the soul (especially in reasoning) doth work, it preferreth rest in ignorance before wearisome labour to know. For a spur of diligence, therefore, we have a natural thirst after knowledge ingrafted in us. But by reason of that original weakness in the instruments, without which the understanding part is not able in this world by discourse to work, the very conceit of painfulness is as a bridle to stay us. For which cause the Apostle, who knew right well that the weariness of the flesh is an heavy clog to the will, striketh mightily upon this key, "Awake, thou that sleepest, cast off all which presseth down, watch, labour, strive to go forward and to grow in knowledge."

8. Wherefore to return to our former intent of discovering the natural way, whereby rules have been found out concerning that goodness wherewith the will of man ought to be moved in human actions, as everything naturally and necessarily doth desire the utmost good and greatest perfection whereof Nature hath made it capable, even so man. Our felicity, therefore, being the object and accomplishment of our desire, we cannot choose but wish and covet it. All particular things which doth object unto action the will doth so far forth incline unto, as reason judgeth them the better for us, and consequently more available to our bliss. If reason err we fall into error, and are so far forth deprived of the general perfection we seek. Seeing, therefore, that for the framing of men's actions the knowledge of good from evil is necessary, it only resteth that we search how this may be had. Neither must we suppose that there needeth one rule to know the good, and another the evil by. For he that knoweth what is straight doth even thereby discern what is crooked, because the absence of straightness in bodies capable thereof is crookedness. Goodness in actions is like unto straightness; wherefore that which is done well we term

right. For as the straight way is most acceptable to him that travelleth, because by it he cometh soonest to his journey's end; so in action that which doth lie the evenest between us and the end we desire must needs be the fittest for our use. Besides which fitness for use, there is also in rectitude beauty; as contrariwise in obliquity, deformity. And that which is good in the actions of men, doth not only delight as profitable but as amiable also. In which consideration the Grecians most divinely have given to the active perfection of men a name expressing both beauty and goodness, because goodness in ordinary speech is for the most part applied only to that which is beneficial. But we, in the name of goodness, do here employ both, and of discerning goodness there are but these two ways—the one the knowledge of the causes whereby it is made such; the other the observation of those signs and tokens which being annexed always unto goodness argue that where they are found there also goodness is, although we know not the cause by force whereof it is there. The former of these is the most sure and infallible way, but so hard that all shun it, and had rather walk as men do in the dark by haphazard, than tread so long and intricate mazes for knowledge sake. As, therefore, physicians are many times forced to leave such methods of curing as themselves know to be the fittest, and being over-ruled by their patients' impatience are fain to try the best they can in taking that way of cure which the cured will yield unto: in like sort, considering how the case doth stand with this present age full of tongue and weak of brain, behold we yield to the stream thereof; into the causes of goodness we will not make any curious or deep inquiry; to touch them now and then it shall be sufficient, when they are so near at hand that easily they may be conceived without any far removed discourse: that way we are contented to prove, which being the worse in itself, is notwithstanding now by reason of common imbecility the fitter and likelier to be brooked. Signs and tokens to know good by are of sundry kinds: some more certain, and some less. The most certain token of evident goodness is if the general persuasion of all men do so account it. And, therefore, a common received error is never utterly overthrown till such time as we go from signs unto causes and show some manifest root or fountain thereof common unto all, whereby

it may clearly appear how it hath come to pass that so many have been overseen. In which case surmises and slight probabilities will not serve, because the universal consent of men is the perfectest and strongest in this kind which comprehendeth only the signs and tokens of goodness. Things casual do vary, and that which a man doth but chance to think well of, cannot still have the like hap. Wherefore, although we know not the cause, yet thus much we may know, that some necessary cause there is whensoever the judgments of all men generally or for the most part run one and the same way, especially in matters of natural discourse. For of things necessarily and naturally done there is no more affirmed but this, "They keep either always or for the most part one tenure." The general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God himself. For that which all men have at all times learned, Nature herself must needs have taught; and God being the author of Nature, her voice is but His instrument. By her from Him we receive whatsoever in such sort we learn. Infinite duties there are, the goodness whereof is by this rule sufficiently manifested, although we had no other warrant besides to approve them. The Apostle St. Paul having speech concerning the heathen, saith of them, "They are a law unto themselves." His meaning is, that by force of the light of reason, wherewith God illuminateth every one which cometh into the world, men being enabled to know truth from falsehood, and good from evil, do thereby learn in many things what the will of God is; which will Himself not revealing by any extraordinary means unto them, but they by natural discourse attaining the knowledge thereof, seem the makers of those laws which indeed are His, and they but only the finders of them out. A law, therefore, generally taken is a directive rule unto goodness of operation. The rule of divine operations outward is the definite appointment of God's own wisdom set down within Himself. The rule of natural agents that work by simple necessity is the determination of the wisdom of God known to God himself, the principal director of them, but not unto them that are directed to execute the same. The rule of natural agents which work after a sort of their own accord, as the beasts do, is the judgment of common sense or fancy concerning the sensible goodness of those objects wherewith they are moved. The rule of ghostly or immaterial natures, as

spirits and angels, is their intuitive intellectual judgment concerning the amiable beauty and high goodness of that object, which with unspeakable joy and delight doth set them on work. The rule of voluntary agents on earth is the sentence that reason giveth concerning the goodness of those things which they are to do, and the sentences which reason giveth are some more, some less general, before it come to define in particular actions what is good. The main principles of reason are in themselves apparent. For to make nothing evident of itself unto man's understanding were to take away all possibility of knowing anything, and herein that of Theophrastus is true, "They that seek a reason of all things do utterly overthrow reason." In every kind of knowledge some such grounds there are, as that being proposed, the mind doth presently embrace them as free from all possibility of error, clear and manifest without proof. In which kind axioms or principles more general are such as this, "That the greater good is to be chosen before the less." If, therefore, it should be demanded what reason there is why the will of man, which doth necessarily shun harm and covet whatsoever is pleasant and sweet, should be commanded to count the pleasures of sin gall, and notwithstanding the bitter accidents wherewith virtuous actions are compassed, yet still to rejoice and delight in them; surely this could never stand with reason: but that wisdom thus prescribing groundeth her laws upon an infallible rule of comparison, which is that small difficulties, when exceeding great good is sure to ensue; and on the other side momentary benefits, when the hurt which they draw after them is unspeakable, are not at all to be respected. This rule is the ground whereupon the wisdom of the apostle buildeth a law, enjoining patience unto himself. "The present lightness of our affliction worketh unto us even with abundance upon abundance an eternal weight of glory, while we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen eternal." Therefore Christianity to be embraced, whatsoever calamities in those times it was accompanied withal. Upon the same ground our Saviour proveth the law most reasonable that doth forbid those crimes which men for *gains' sake* fall into. For a man to win the world, if it be *with the loss of his soul*, what benefit or good is it?

Axioms less general, yet so manifest, that they need no further proof, are such as these: "God to be worshipped, parents to be honoured, others to be used by us as we ourselves would by them." Such things, as soon as they are alleged, all men acknowledge to be good; they require no proof or further discourse to be assured of their goodness. Notwithstanding whatsoever such principle there is, it was at the first found out by discourse, and drawn from out of the very bowels of heaven and earth. For we are to note that things in the world are to us discernable, not only so far forth as serveth for our vital preservation, but further also in a twofold higher respect. For first, if all other uses were utterly taken away; yet the mind of man being by nature speculative and delighted with contemplation in itself, they were to be known even for mere knowledge and understanding's sake. Yea further besides this, the knowledge of every the least thing in the world hath in it a second peculiar benefit unto us, inasmuch, as it serveth to minister rules, canons, and laws for men to direct those actions by, which we properly term human. This did the very heathens themselves obscurely insinuate, by making Themis, which we call Jus or Right, to be the daughter of heaven and earth. We know things either as they are in themselves, or as they are in mutual relation one to another. The knowledge of that which man is in reference unto himself, and other things in relation unto man, I may justly term the mother of all those principles, which are as it were edicts, statutes, and decrees in that law of nature whereby human actions are framed. First, therefore, having observed that the best things, where they are not hindered, do still produce the best operations (for which cause where many things are to concur unto one effect, the best is in all congruity of reason to guide the residue, that it prevailing most, the work principally done by it may have greatest perfection); when hereupon we come to observe in ourselves of what excellency our souls are in comparison of our bodies, and the diviner part in relation unto the baser of our souls; seeing that all these concur in producing human actions, it cannot be well unless the chiefest do command and direct the rest. The soul then ought to conduct the body, and the spirit of our minds. the soul. This is, therefore, the first law whereby the highest power of the mind requireth general obedience

at the hands of all the rest concurring with it unto action. Touching the several grand mandates, which being imposed by the understanding faculty of the mind, must be obeyed by the will of man, they are by the same method found out, whether they import our duty towards God or towards man. Touching the one, I may not here stand to open, by what degrees of discourse the minds even of mere natural men have attained to know, not only that there is a God, but also what power, force, wisdom, and other properties that God hath, and how all things depend on Him. This being, therefore, presupposed from that known relation which God hath unto us as unto children, and unto all good things as unto effects, whereof Himself is the principal cause, these axioms and laws natural concerning our duty have arisen : "That in all things we go about, His aid is by prayer to be craved ; that He cannot have sufficient honour done unto Him, but the uttermost of that we can do to honour Him we must ;" which is in effect the same that we read, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Which law our Saviour doth term the first and the great commandment. Touching the next, which, as our Saviour addeth, is like unto this (he meaneth in amplitude and largeness, inasmuch as it is the root out of which all laws of duty to men-ward have grown, as out of the former all offices of religion towards God), the like natural inducement hath brought men to know that it is their duty no less to love others than themselves. For seeing those things which are equal, must needs all have one measure : if I cannot but wish to receive all good, even as much at every man's hand as any man can wish unto his own soul ; how should I look to have any part of my desire herein satisfied, unless myself be careful to satisfy the like desire, which is undoubtedly in other men, we all being of one and the same nature ? To have anything offered them repugnant to this desire, must needs in all respects grieve them as much as me : so that if I do harm, I must look to suffer ; there being no reason that others should show greater measure of love to me, than they have by me showed unto them. My desire, therefore, to be loved of my equals in nature as much as possible may be, imposeth upon me a *natural duty of bearing to them-ward fully the like affection.* *From which relation of equality between ourselves and them*

that are as ourselves, what several rules and canons natural reason hath drawn for direction of life, no man is ignorant ; as namely : " That because we would take no harm, we must, therefore, do none ; that since we would not be in anything extremely dealt with, we must ourselves avoid all extremity in our dealings ; that from all violence and wrong we are utterly to abstain," with such like ; which further to wade in would be tedious, and to our present purpose not altogether so necessary, seeing that on these two general heads already mentioned, all other specialities are dependent. Wherefore, the natural measure whereby to judge our doings is the sentence of reason, determining and setting down what is good to be done. Which sentence is either mandatory, showing what must be done ; or else permissive, declaring only what may be done ; or thirdly, admonitory, opening what is the most convenient for us to do. The first taketh place, where the comparison doth stand altogether between doing and not doing of one thing which in itself is absolutely good or evil ; as it had been for Joseph to yield or not to yield to the impotent desire of his lewd mistress, the one evil, the other good simply. The second is, when of divers things evil, all being not evitable, we are permitted to take one ; which one saving only in case of so great urgency were not otherwise to be taken ; as in the matter of divorce amongst the Jews. The last, when of divers things good, one is principal and most eminent ; as in their act who sold their possessions and laid the price at the apostles' feet, which possessions they might have retained unto themselves without sin ; again, in the Apostle St. Paul's own choice to maintain himself by his own labour, whereas in living by the Church's maintenance, as others did, there had been no offence committed. In goodness, therefore, there is a latitude or extent whereby it cometh to pass that even of good actions some are better than other some ; whereas otherwise one man could not excel another, but all should be either absolutely good, as hitting jump that indivisible point or centre wherein goodness consisteth, or else missing it they should be excluded out of the number of well-doers. Degrees of well-doing there could be none, except, perhaps, in the seldomness and oftenness of doing well. But the nature of goodness being thus ample a law is properly that which reason in such sort defineth to be good that it must

- be done. And the law of reason or human nature is that which men by discourse of natural reason have rightly found out themselves to be all for ever bound unto in their actions.
 - Laws of reason have these marks to be known by. Such as keep them resemble most lively in their voluntary actions that very manner of working which Nature herself doth necessarily observe in the course of the whole world. The works of Nature are all behoveful, beautiful, without superfluity or defect: even so theirs, if they be framed according to that which the law of reason teacheth. Secondly, those laws are investigable by reason, without the help of revelation, supernatural and divine. Finally, in such sort they are investigable that the knowledge of them is general, the world hath always been acquainted with them, according to that which one in Sophocles observeth concerning a branch of this law, "It is no child of two days' or yesterday's birth, but hath been no man knoweth how long since." It is not agreed upon by one, or two, or few, but by all; which we may not so understand as if every particular man in the whole world did know and confess whatsoever the law of reason doth contain; but this law is such that being proposed no man can reject it as unreasonable and unjust.
 - Again, there is nothing in it but any man, having natural perfection of wit and ripeness of judgment, may by labour and travail find out. And to conclude, the general principles thereof are such as it is not easy to find men ignorant of them.
- Law rational, therefore, which men commonly use to call the law of Nature, meaning thereby the law which human nature knoweth itself in reason universally bound unto, which also for that cause may be termed most fitly the law of reason, this law, I say, comprehendeth all those things which men by the light of their natural understanding evidently know, or at leastwise may know, to be befitting or unfitting, virtuous or vicious, good or evil for them to do. Now although it be true, which some have said, that whatsoever is done amiss the law of Nature and reason thereby is transgressed; because even those offences which are by their special qualities breaches of supernatural laws do also, for that they are generally evil violate in general that principle of reason which willett universally to fly from evil: yet do we not therefore so far extend the law of reason, as to contain in it all manner laws whereunto reasonable creatures are bound; but, as hath been showed, we restrain

it to those only duties which all men by force of natural wit either do or might understand to be such duties as concern all men. "Certain half-waking men there are," as St. Augustine noteth, "who neither altogether asleep in folly, nor yet thoroughly awake in the light of true understanding, have thought that there is not at all anything just and righteous in itself, but look wherewith nations are inured, the same they take to be right and just. Whereupon their conclusion is that seeing each sort of people hath a different kind of right from other, and that which is right of its own nature must be everywhere one and the same, therefore in itself there is nothing right. These good folk," saith he, that I may not trouble their wits with rehearsal of too many things, "have not looked so far into the world as to perceive that 'Do as thou wouldst be done unto,' is a sentence which all nations under heaven are agreed upon. Refer this sentence to the love of God and it extinguisheth all heinous crimes; refer it to the love of thy neighbour and all grievous wrongs it banisheth out of the world." Wherefore as touching the law of reason, this was, it seemeth, St. Augustine's judgment, namely, that there are in it some things which stand as principles universally agreed upon, and that out of those principles, which are in themselves evident, the greatest moral duties we owe towards God or man may without any great difficulty be concluded. If then it be here demanded by what means it should come to pass, the greatest part of the law moral being so easy for all men to know, that so many thousands of men notwithstanding have been ignorant even of principal moral duties, not imagining the breach of them to be sin: I deny not but lewd and wicked custom, beginning, perhaps, at the first amongst few, afterwards spreading into greater multitudes, and so continuing from time to time, may be of force even in plain things to smother the light of natural understanding, because men will not bend their wits to examine whether things wherewith they have been accustomed be good or evil. For example's sake, that grosser kind of heathenish idolatry whereby they worshipped the very works of their own hands, was an absurdity to reason so palpable that the prophet David comparing idols and idolaters together maketh almost no odds between them, but the one in a manner as much without wit and sense as the other, "They that make *them are like unto them*, and so are all that trust in them."

That wherein an idolater doth seem so absurd and foolish, is by the wise man thus expressed, "He is not ashamed to speak unto that which hath no life, he calleth on him that is weak for health, he prayeth for life unto him which is dead, of him which hath no experience he requireth help, for his journey he sueth to him which is not able to go, for gain and work and success in his affairs he seeketh furtherance of him that hath no manner of power." The cause of which senseless stupidity is afterwards imputed to custom. "When a father mourned grievously for his son that was taken away suddenly, he made an image for him that was once dead, whom now he worshipped as a God, ordaining to his servants ceremonies and sacrifices. Thus by process of time this wicked custom prevailed and was kept as a law;" the authority of rulers, the ambition of craftsmen, and such like means thrusting forward the ignorant and increasing their superstition. Unto this which the wise man hath spoken somewhat besides may be added. For whatsoever we have hitherto taught, or shall hereafter, concerning the force of man's natural understanding, this we always desire withal to be understood, that there is no kind of faculty or power in man or any other creature which can rightly perform the functions allotted to it without perpetual aid and concurrence of that supreme cause of all things. The benefit whereof as oft as we cause God in His justice to withdraw, there can no other thing follow than that which the Apostle noteth, even men endued with the light of reason to walk notwithstanding "in the vanity of their mind, having their cogitations darkened, and being strangers from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts." And this cause is mentioned by the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the ignorance of idolaters, who see not how the manifest law of reason condemneth their gross iniquity and sin. They have not in them, saith he, so much wit as to think, "Shall I bow to the stock of a tree?" All knowledge and understanding is taken from them; for God hath shut their eyes that they cannot see. That which we say in this case of idolatry, serveth for all other things, wherein the like kind of general blindness hath prevailed against the manifest laws of reason. Within the compass of which laws we do not *only comprehend* whatsoever may be easily known to belong *to the duty of all men*; but even whatsoever may possibly

be known to be of that quality, so that the same be by necessary consequence deduced out of clear and manifest principles. For if once we descend unto probable collections what is convenient for men, we are then in the territory where free and arbitrary determinations, the territory where human laws take place, which laws are after to be considered.

9. Now the due observation of this law which reason teacheth us, cannot but be effectual unto their great good that observe the same. For we see the whole world and each part thereof so compacted, that as long as each thing performeth only that work which is natural unto it, it thereby preserveth both other things, and also itself. Contrariwise let any principal thing, as the sun, the moon, any one of the heavens or elements, but once cease or fail, or swerve; and who doth not easily conceive, that the sequel thereof would be ruin both to itself, and whatsoever dependeth on it. And is it possible that man, being not only the noblest creature in the world, but even a very world in himself, his transgressing the law of his nature should draw no manner of harm after it? Yes, "tribulation and anguish unto every soul that doth evil." Good doth follow unto all things by observing the course of their nature, and on the contrary side evil by not observing it; but not unto natural agents that good which we call "reward," not that evil which we properly term "punishment." The reason whereof is, because amongst creatures in this world, only man's observation of the law of his nature is "righteousness," only man's transgression "sin." And the reason of this is the difference in his manner of observing or transgressing the law of his nature. He doth not otherwise than voluntarily the one or the other. What we do against our wills, or constrainedly, we are not properly said to do it, because the motive cause of doing it is not in ourselves, but carrieth us, as if the wind should drive a feather in the air, we no wit furthering that whereby we are driven. In such cases, therefore, the evil which is done moveth compassion, men are pitied for it, as being rather miserable in such respect than culpable. Some things are likewise done by man, though not through outward force and impulsion, though not against yet without their wills, as in alienation of mind, or any the like inevitable utter absence of wit and judgment. For which cause no man did ever think the hurtful actions

of furious men and innocents to be punishable. Again, some things we do neither against nor without, and yet not simply and merely with our wills, but with our wills in such sort moved, that albeit there be no impossibility but that we might, nevertheless we are not so easily able to do otherwise. In this consideration one evil deed is made more pardonable than another. Finally, that which we do being evil, is notwithstanding by so much more pardonable by how much the exigence of so doing, or the difficulty of doing otherwise is greater, unless this necessity or difficulty have originally risen from ourselves. It is no excuse, therefore, unto him who being drunk committeth incest, and allegeth that his wits were not his own, inasmuch as himself might have chosen whether his wits should by that means have been taken from him. Now rewards and punishments do always presuppose something willingly done well or ill, without which respect, though we may sometimes receive good or harm, yet then the one is only a benefit and not a reward, the other simply an hurt, not a punishment. From the sundry dispositions of man's will, which is the root of all his actions, there groweth variety in the sequel of rewards and punishments, which are by these and the like rules measured: "Take away the will, and all acts are equal; that which we do not and would do is commonly accepted as done." By these and the like rules men's actions are determined of and judged whether they be in their own nature rewardable or punishable. Rewards and punishments are not received but at the hands of such, as being above us, have power to examine and judge our deeds. How men come to have this authority one over another in external actions we shall more diligently examine in that which followeth. But for this present so much all do acknowledge, that since every man's heart and conscience doth in good or evil, even secretly committed and known to none but itself, either like or disallow itself, and accordingly either rejoice, very nature exulting as it were in certain hope of reward, or else grieve as it were in a sense of future punishment, neither of which can in this case be looked for from any other, saving only from Him who discerneth and judgeth the very secrets of all hearts, therefore He is the only rewarder and revenger of all such actions, although not of *such actions only*, but of all whereby the law of Nature is *broken*, whereof Himself is author. For which cause the

Roman laws, called the Laws of the Twelve Tables, requiring offices of inward affection, which the eye of man cannot reach unto, threaten the neglecters of them with none but divine punishment.

10. That which hitherto we have set down is, I hope, sufficient to show their brutishness which imagine that religion and virtue are only as men will account of them; that we might make as much account, if we would, of the contrary without any harm unto ourselves, and that in Nature they are as indifferent one as the other. We see then how Nature itself teacheth laws and statutes to live by. The laws which have been hitherto mentioned do bind men absolutely, even as they are men, although they have never any settled fellowship, never any solemn agreement amongst themselves what to do or not to do. But forasmuch as we are not by ourselves sufficient to furnish ourselves with competent store of things needful for such a life as our nature doth desire, a life fit for the dignity of man, therefore to supply those defects and imperfections which are in us living single and solely by ourselves, we are naturally induced to seek communion and fellowship with others. This was the cause of men's uniting themselves at the first in political societies, which societies could not be without government, nor government without a distinct kind of law from that which hath been already declared. Two foundations there are which bear up public societies—the one, a natural inclination, whereby all men desire sociable life and fellowship; the other, an order expressly or secretly agreed upon, touching the manner of their union in living together. The latter is that which we call the law of a common weal, the very soul of a politic body, the parts whereof are by law animated, held together, and set on work in such actions as the common good requireth. Laws politic, ordained for external order and regiment amongst men, are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature; in a word, unless presuming man to be in regard of his depraved mind, little better than a wild beast, they do accordingly provide notwithstanding so to frame his outward actions, that they be no hindrance unto the common good for which societies are instituted; unless they do this, they are not perfect. *It resteth therefore that we consider how Nature findeth out*

such laws of government, as serve to direct even nature depraved to a right end. All men desire to lead in this world an happy life. The life is led most happily wherein all virtue is exercised without impediment or let. The Apostle, in exhorting men to contentment, although they have in this world no more than very bare food and raiment, giveth us thereby to understand, that those are even the lowest of things necessary, that if we should be stripped of all those things without which we might possibly be, yet these must be left; that destitution in these is such an impediment, as, till it be removed, suffereth not the mind of man to admit any other care. For this cause first God assigned Adam maintenance of life, and then appointed him a law to observe. For this cause, after men began to grow to a number, the first thing we read they gave themselves unto, was the tilling of the earth, and the feeding of cattle. Having by this means whereon to live, the principal actions of their life afterward are noted by the exercise of their religion. True it is, that the Kingdom of God must be the first thing in our purposes and desires; but, inasmuch as righteous life presupposeth life, inasmuch as to live virtuously it is impossible except we live; therefore the first impediment, which naturally we endeavour to remove, is penury and want of things without which we cannot live. Unto life many implements are necessary; more, if we seek (as all men naturally do) such a life as hath in it joy, comfort, delight, and pleasure. To this end we see how quickly sundry arts mechanically were found out in the very prime of the world. As things of greatest necessity are always first provided for, so things of greatest dignity are most accounted of by all such as judge rightly. Although, therefore, riches be a thing which every man wisheth, yet no man of judgment can esteem it better to be rich, than wise, virtuous, and religious. If we be both, or either of these, it is not because we are so born. For into the world we come as empty of the one as of the other, as naked in mind as we are in body. Both which necessities of man had at the first no other helps and supplies, than only domestically; such as that which the Prophet implieth, saying, "Can a mother forget her child?" Such as that which the Apostle mentioneth, saying, "He that careth not for his own is worse than an infidel;" such as that concerning Abraham, "Abraham will command his sons and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord."

But neither that which we learn of ourselves, nor that which others teach us can prevail, where wickedness and malice have taken deep root. If, therefore, when there was but as yet one only family in the world, no means of instruction, human or Divine, could prevent effusion of blood; how could it be chosen but that when families were multiplied and increased upon earth, after separation, each providing for itself, envy, strife, contention, and violence must grow amongst them? For hath not Nature furnished man with wit and valour, and as it were with armour, which may be used as well unto extreme evil as good? Yea, were they not used by the rest of the world unto evil; unto the contrary only by Seth, Enoch, and those few the rest in that line? We all make complaint of the iniquity of our times; not unjustly, for the days are evil. But compare them with those times wherein there were no civil societies, with those times wherein there was as yet no manner of public regiment established, with those times wherein there were not above eight righteous persons living upon the face of the earth; and we have surely good cause to think that God hath blessed us exceedingly, and hath made us behold most happy days. To take away all such mutual grievances, injuries, and wrongs, there was no way but only by growing unto composition and agreement amongst themselves; by ordaining some kind of government public, and by yielding themselves subject thereunto; that unto whom they granted authority to rule and govern, by them the peace, tranquility, and happy estate of the rest might be procured. Men always knew that when force and injury was offered, they might be defenders of themselves; they knew that howsoever men may seek their own commodity, yet if this were done with injury unto others, it was not to be suffered, but by all men and by all good means to be withstood; finally, they knew that no man might in reason take upon him to determine his own right, and according to his own determination proceed in maintenance thereof, inasmuch as every man is towards himself, and them whom he greatly affecteth, partial; and therefore that strifes and troubles would be endless, except they gave their common consent all to be ordered by some whom they should agree upon: without which consent, there were no reason that one man should take upon him to be lord or judge over another; because although there be according to the opinion of some very

great and judicious men, a kind of natural right in the noble, wise, and virtuous, to govern them which are of servile disposition; nevertheless for manifestation of this their right, and men's more peaceable contentment on both sides, the assent of them who are to be governed seemeth necessary. To fathers within their private families Nature hath given a supreme power; for which cause we see throughout the world, even from the first foundation thereof, all men have ever been taken as lords and lawful kings in their own houses. Howbeit over a whole grand multitude having no such dependency upon any one, and consisting of so many families as every politic society in the world doth, impossible it is that any should have complete lawful power, but by consent of men, or immediate appointment of God; because not having the natural superiority of fathers, their power must needs be either usurped, and then unlawful; or if lawful, then either granted or consented unto by them over whom they exercise the same, or else given extraordinarily from God, unto whom all the world is subject. It is no improbable opinion therefore which the arch-philosopher was of, that as the chiefest person in every household was always as it were a king, so when numbers of households joined themselves in civil societies together, kings were the first kind of governors amongst them. Which is also as it seemeth the reason, why the name of father continued still in them, who of fathers were made rulers: as also the ancient custom of governors to do as Melchisedec, and being kings, to exercise the office of priests, which fathers did at the first, grew perhaps by the same occasion. Howbeit not this the only kind of regiment that hath been received in the world. The inconveniences of one kind have caused sundry other to be devised. So that in a word all public regiment, of what kind soever, seemeth evidently to have risen from deliberate advice, consultation, and composition between men, judging it convenient and behoveful; there being no impossibility in Nature considered by itself, but that men might have lived without any public regiment. Howbeit the corruption of our nature being presupposed, we may not deny but that the law of Nature doth now require of necessity some kind of regiment; so that to bring things unto the first course they were in, and utterly to take away all kind of public government in the world, were apparently to overturn the whole world. The case of man's nature standing therefore as it doth, some kind of regiment

the law of Nature doth require, yet the kinds thereof being many, Nature tieth not to any one, but leaveth the choice as a thing arbitrary. At the first when some certain kind of regiment was once approved, it may be that nothing was then further thought upon for the manner of governing, but all permitted unto their wisdom and discretion which were to rule; till by experience they found this for all parts very inconvenient; so as the thing which they had devised for a remedy, did indeed but increase the sore which it should have cured. They saw that to live by one man's will, became the cause of all men's misery. This constrained them to come unto laws, wherein all men might see their duties beforehand, and know the penalties of transgressing them. If things be simply good or evil, and withal universally so acknowledged, there needs no new law to be made for such things. The first kind therefore of things appointed by laws human, containeth whatsoever being in itself naturally good or evil, is notwithstanding more secret than that it can be discerned by every man's present conceit, without some deeper discourse and judgment. In which discourse, because there is difficulty and possibility many ways to err, unless such things were set down by laws, many would be ignorant of their duties which now are not; and many that know what they should do, would nevertheless dissemble it, and to excuse themselves pretend ignorance and simplicity, which now they cannot. And because the greatest part of men are such as prefer their own private good before all things, even that good which is sensual, before whatsoever is most divine; and for that the labour of doing good, together with the pleasure arising from the contrary, doth make men for the most part slower to the one, and proner to the other, than that duty prescribed them by law can prevail sufficiently with them: therefore unto laws that men do make for the benefit of men, it hath seemed always needful to add rewards which may more allure unto good than any hardness deterreth from it, and punishments which may more deter from evil than any sweetness thereto allureth. Wherein as the generality is natural, virtue rewardable, and vice punishable: so the particular determination of the reward or punishment, belongeth unto them by whom laws are made. Theft is naturally punishable, but the kind of punishment is positive, and such lawful as men shall think *with discretion* convenient by law to appoint. In laws

that which is natural bindeth universally, that which is positive not so. To let go those kind of positive laws which men impose upon themselves, as by vow unto God, contract with men, or such like, somewhat it will make unto our purpose, a little more fully to consider, what things are incident into the making of the positive laws for the government of them that live united in public society. Laws do not only teach what is good, but they enjoin it, they have in them a certain constraining force. And to constrain men unto anything inconvenient doth seem unreasonable. Most requisite therefore it is, that to devise laws which all men shall be forced to obey, none but wise men be admitted. Laws are matters of principal consequence; men of common capacity, and but ordinary judgment are not able (for how should they?) to discern what things are fittest for each kind and state of regiment. We cannot be ignorant how much our obedience unto laws dependeth upon this point. Let a man though never so justly, oppose himself unto them that are disordered in their ways, and what one amongst them commonly doth not stomach at such contradiction, storm at reproof, and hate such as would reform them? Notwithstanding even they which brook it worst that men should tell them of their duties, when they are told the same by a law, think very well and reasonably of it. For why? They presume that the law doth speak with all indifferency, that the law hath no side respect to their persons, that the law is as it were an oracle proceeded from wisdom and understanding. (Howbeit laws do not take their constraining force from the quality of such as devise them, but from that power which doth give them the strength of laws. That which we spake before concerning the power of government, must here be applied unto the power of making laws whereby to govern; which power God hath over all; and by the natural law whereunto He hath made all subject, the lawful power of making laws to command whole politic societies of men, belongeth so properly unto the same entire societies, that for any prince or potentate of what kind soever upon earth to exercise the same of himself, and not either by express commission immediately and personally received from God, or else by authority derived at the first from their consent upon whose persons they impose laws, *it is no better than mere tyranny.* Laws they are not therefore which public approbation hath not made so. But

7 approbation not only they give who personally declare their assent by voice, sign or act, but also when others do it in their names by right originally at the least derived from them. As in Parliaments, Councils, and the like assemblies, although we be not personally ourselves present, notwithstanding our assent is by reason of other agents there in our behalf. And what we do by others no reason but that it should stand as our deed, no less effectually to bind us than if ourselves had done it in person. In many things assent is given they that give it not imagining they do so, because the manner of their assenting is not apparent. As for example, when an absolute monarch commandeth his subjects that which seemeth good in his own discretion, hath not his edict the force of a law whether they approve or dislike it? Again, that which hath been received long since, and is by custom now established, we keep as a law which we may not transgress, yet what consent was ever thereunto sought or required at our hands? Of this point, therefore, we are to note that since men naturally have no full and perfect power to command whole politic multitudes of men; therefore, utterly without our consent, we could in such sort be at no man's commandment living. And to be commanded we do consent when that society whereof we are part, hath at any time before consented without revoking the same after by the like universal agreement. Wherefore as any man's deed past is good as long as himself continueth, so the act of a public society of men done five hundred years since, standeth as theirs who presently are of the same societies, because corporations are immortal: we were then alive in our predecessors, and they in their successors do live still. Laws therefore human, of what kind soever, are available by consent. If here it be demanded how it cometh to pass that this being common unto all laws which are made, there should be found even in good laws so great variety as there is, we must note the reason hereof to be the sundry particular ends whereunto the different disposition of that subject or matter for which laws are provided, causeth them to have special respect in making laws. A law there is mentioned among the Grecians, whereof Pittacus is reported to have been author, and by that law it was agreed that he which being overcome with drink did then strike any man should suffer punishment double as much as if he had done the same being sober. No man could

D

ever have thought this reasonable that had intended thereby only to punish the injury committed according to the gravity of the fact. For who knoweth not that harm advisedly done is naturally less pardonable, and therefore worthy of sharper punishment? But forasmuch as none did so usually this way offend as men in that case which they wittingly fell into, even because they would be so much the more freely outrageous, it was for their public good where such disorder was grown, to frame a positive law for remedy thereof accordingly. To this appertain those known laws of making laws, as that law-makers must have an eye to the place where, and to the men amongst whom, that one kind of laws cannot serve for all kinds of regiment, that where the multitude beareth sway, laws that shall tend unto the preservation of that state, must make common smaller offices to go by lot, for fear of strife and division likely to arise, by reason that ordinary qualities sufficing for discharge of such offices, they could not but by many be desired, and so with danger contended for, and not missed without grudge and discontentment, whereas at an uncertain lot none can find themselves grieved on whomsoever it lighteth; contrariwise the greatest, whereof but few are capable to pass by popular election, that neither the people may envy such as have those honours, inasmuch as themselves bestow them, and that the chiefest may be kindled with desire to exercise all parts of rare and beneficial virtue, knowing they shall not lose their labour by growing in fame and estimation amongst the people: if the helm of chief government be in the hands of a few of the wealthiest, that then laws providing for continuance thereof must make the punishment of contumely and wrong offered unto any of the common sort sharp and grievous, that so the evil may be prevented, whereby the rich are most likely to bring themselves into hatred with the people, who are not wont to take so great offence when they are excluded from honours and offices as when their persons are contumeliously trodden upon. In other kinds of regiment the like is observed concerning the difference of positive laws, which to be everywhere the same is impossible and against their nature. Now, as the learned in the laws of this land observe, that our statutes sometimes are only the affirmation or ratification of that which, by common law, was held before. So here it is not to be omitted that, generally, all laws human which are made for

the ordering of politic societies, be either such as establish some duty whereunto all men by the law of reason did before stand bound, or else such as make that a duty now which before was none. The one sort we may, for distinction's sake, call mixedly, and the other merely, human. That which plain or necessary reason bindeth men unto, may be in sundry considerations expedient to be ratified by human law. For example, if confusion of blood in marriage, the liberty of having many wives at once, or any other the like corrupt and unreasonable custom doth happen to have prevailed far, and to have gotten the upper hand of right reason with the greatest part, so that no way is left to rectify such foul disorder, without prescribing by law the same things which reason necessarily doth enforce, but is not perceived that so it doth; or if many be grown unto that which the Apostle did lament in some, concerning whom he writeth, saying, that "Even what things they naturally know in those very things as beasts void of reason, they corrupted themselves;" or, if there be no such special accident, yet forasmuch as the common sort are led by the sway of their sensual desires, and therefore do more shun sin for the sensible evils which follow it amongst men, than for any kind of sentence which reason doth pronounce against it; this very thing is cause sufficient why duties belonging unto each kind of virtue, albeit the law of reason teach them, should, notwithstanding, be prescribed even by human law. Which law in this case we term mixed, because the matter whereunto it bindeth is the same which reason necessarily doth require at our hands, and from the law of reason it differeth in the manner of binding only. For whereas men before stood bound in conscience to do as the law of reason teacheth, they are now by virtue of human law become constrainable and, if they outwardly transgress, punishable. As for laws which are merely human, the matter of them is anything which reason doth but probably teach to be fit and convenient, so that till such time as law hath passed amongst men about it, of itself it bindeth no man. One example whereof may be this: Lands are by human law, in some places, after the owner's decease, divided unto all his children; in some, all descendeth to the eldest son. If the law of reason did necessarily require but the one of these two to be done, they which by law have received the other *should be subject to that heavy sentence which*

denounceth against all that decree wicked, unjust, and unreasonable things, woe. Whereas now, whichsoever be received, there is no law of reason transgressed, because there is probable reason why either of them may be expedient, and for either of them more than probable reason there is not to be found. Laws whether mixedly or merely human are made by politic societies: some, only as those societies are civilly united; some, as they are spiritually joined and make such a body as we call the Church. Of laws human in this later kind we are to speak in the third book following. (Let it therefore suffice thus far to have touched the force wherewith Almighty God hath graciously endued our nature, and thereby enabled the same to find out both those laws which all men generally are for ever bound to observe, and also such as are most fit for their behoof who lead their lives in any ordered state of government.) Now, besides that law which simply concerneth men as men, and that which belongeth unto them as they are men, linked with others in some form of politic society, there is a third kind of law which toucheth all such several bodies politic, so far forth as one of them hath public commerce with another. And this third is the Law of Nations. Between men and beasts there is no possibility of sociable communion, because the well-spring of that communion is a natural delight which man hath to transfuse from himself into others, and to receive from others into himself, especially those things wherein the excellency of this kind doth most consist. The chiefest instrument of human communion therefore is speech, because thereby we impart mutually one to another the conceits of our reasonable understanding. And for that cause seeing beasts are not hereof capable, forasmuch as with them we can use no such conference, they being in degree although above other creatures on earth to whom Nature hath denied sense, yet lower than to be sociable companions of man to whom Nature hath given reason; it is of Adam said that, amongst the beasts "he found not for himself any meet companion." Civil society doth more content the nature of man than any private kind of solitary living, because, in society, this good of mutual participation is so much larger than otherwise. Herewith notwithstanding we are not satisfied, but we covet (if it might be) to have a kind of *society and fellowship* even with all mankind. Which thing

Socrates intending to signify, professed himself a citizen, not of this or that commonwealth, but of the world. And an effect of that very natural desire in us (a manifest token that we wish after a sort an universal fellowship with all men), appeareth by the wonderful delight men have, some to visit foreign countries, some to discover nations not heard of in former ages; we all to know the affairs and dealings of other people, yea, to be in league of amity with them: and this, not only for traffic's sake or to the end that when many are confederated each may make other the more strong, but for such cause also as moved the Queen of Sheba to visit Solomon, and, in a word, because Nature doth presume that how many men there are in the world, so many gods, as it were, there are, or at leastwise such they should be towards men. Touching laws which are to serve men in this behalf, even as those laws of reason, which (man retaining his original integrity) had been sufficient to direct each particular person in all his affairs and duties, are not sufficient but require the access of other laws, now that man and his offspring are grown thus corrupt and sinful; again, as those laws of polity and regiment which would have served men living in public society, together with that harmless disposition which then they should have had, are not able now to serve when men's iniquity is so hardly restrained within any tolerable bounds: in like manner the national laws of natural commerce between societies of that former and better quality might have been other than now, when nations are so prone to offer violence, injury, and wrong. Hereupon hath grown in every of these three kinds, that distinction between primary and secondary laws, the one grounded upon sincere, the other built upon depraved, nature. Primary laws of nations are such as concern embassage, such as belong to the courteous entertainment of foreigners and strangers, such as serve for commodious traffic and the like. Secondary laws in the same kind, are such as this present unquiet world is most familiarly acquainted with, I mean laws of arms, which yet are much better known than kept. But what matter the law of nations doth contain I omit to search. The strength and virtue of that law is such, that no particular nation can lawfully prejudice the same by any their several laws and ordinances more than a man, by his private resolutions, the law of the *whole commonwealth* or state wherein he liveth. For as civil

law, being the act of a whole body politic, doth therefore overrule each several part of the same body, so there is no reason that any one commonwealth of itself should, to the prejudice of another, annihilate that whereupon the whole world hath agreed. For which cause the Lacedemonians forbidding all access of strangers into their coasts, are in that respect, both by Josephus and Theodoret, deservedly blamed, as being enemies to that hospitality which, for common humanity's sake, all the nations on earth should embrace. Now as there is great cause of communion, and consequently of laws for the maintenance of communion amongst nations, so amongst nations Christian the like in regard even of Christianity hath been always judged needful. And in this kind of correspondence amongst nations, the force of general counsels doth stand. For as one and the same law divine, whereof in the next place we are to speak, is unto all Christian Churches a rule for the chiefest things by means whereof they all in that respect make one Church, as having all but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," so the urgent necessity of mutual communion for preservation of our unity in these things, as also for order in some other things convenient to be everywhere uniformly kept, maketh it requisite that the Church of God here on earth have her laws of spiritual commerce between Christian nations, laws by virtue whereof all Churches may enjoy freely the use of those reverend, religious, and sacred consultations which are termed Councils general. A thing whereof God's own blessed spirit was the author; a thing practised by the holy apostles themselves; a thing always afterwards kept and observed throughout the world; a thing never otherwise than most highly esteemed of, till pride, ambition, and tyranny began by factious and vile endeavours to abuse that divine invention unto the furtherance of wicked purposes. But as the just authority of civil courts and parliaments is not therefore to be abolished because sometime there is cunning used to frame them according to the private intents of men over-potent in the commonwealth, so the grievous abuse which hath been of councils should rather cause men to study how so gracious a thing may again be reduced to that first perfection, than in regard of stains and blemishes since growing be held for ever in extreme disgrace. To speak of this matter as the cause requireth would require very long discourse.

All I will presently say is this. Whether it be for the finding out of anything whereunto divine law bindeth us, but yet in such sort that men are not thereof on all sides resolved, or for the setting down of some uniform judgment to stand touching such things as being neither way matters of necessity are notwithstanding offensive and scandalous when there is open opposition about them; be it for the ending of strifes touching matters of Christian belief, wherein the one part may seem to have probable cause of dissenting from the other; or be it concerning matters of polity, order and regiment in the Church; I nothing doubt but that Christian men should much better frame themselves to those heavenly precepts which our Lord and Saviour with so great instance gave as concerning peace and unity, if we did all concur in desire to have the use of ancient councils again renewed, rather than these proceedings continued, which either make all contentions endless or bring them to one only determination, and that of all others the worst, which is by sword. It followeth, therefore, that a new foundation being laid, we now adjoin hereunto that which cometh in the next place to be spoken of, namely, wherefore God hath Himself by Scripture made known such laws as serve for direction of men.

II. All things (God only excepted) besides the nature which they have in themselves, receive externally some perfection from other things, as hath been showed; inasmuch as there is in the whole world no one thing, great or small, but either in respect of knowledge or of use it may unto our perfection add somewhat. And whatsoever such perfection there is which our nature may acquire, the same we properly term our good, our sovereign good or blessedness, that wherein the highest degree of all our perfection consisteth, that which being once attained unto there can rest nothing further to be desired, and therefore with it our souls are fully content and satisfied, in that they have they rejoice and thirst for no more, wherefore of good things desired some are such that for themselves we covet them not, but only because they serve as instruments unto that for which we are to seek: of this sort are riches. Another kind there is which, although we desire for itself, as health, and virtue, and knowledge, nevertheless they are not the last mark whereat we aim, but have their further end whereunto they are referred; so as in them we are not

satisfied as having attained the utmost we may, but our desires do still proceed. These things are linked and as it were chained one to another; we labour to eat, and we eat to live, and we live to do good, and the good which we do is as seed sown with reference unto a future harvest. But we must come at the length to some pause; for if everything were to be desired for some other without any stint, there could be no certain end proposed unto our actions, we should go on we know not whither, yea, whatsoever we do ~~were~~ in vain, or rather nothing at all were possible to be done. For as to take away the first efficient of our being were to annihilate utterly our persons, so we cannot remove the last final cause of our working but we shall cause whatsoever we work to cease. Therefore, something there must be desired for itself simply, and for no other; that is, simply for itself desirable, unto the nature whereof it is opposite and repugnant to be desired with relation unto any other. The ox and the ass desire their food, neither propose they unto themselves any end wherefore; so that of them this is desired for itself, but why? By reason of their imperfection, which cannot otherwise desire it; whereas that which is desired simply for itself, the excellency thereof is such as permitteth it not in any sort to be referred unto a further end. Now that which man doth desire with reference to a further end, the same he desireth in such measure as is unto that end convenient; but what he coveteth as good in itself, towards that his desire is ever infinite. So that unless the last good of all which is desired altogether for itself be also infinite, we do evil in making it our end, even as they who placed their felicity in wealth, or honour, or pleasure, or anything here attained, because in desiring anything as our final perfection which is not so we do amiss. Nothing may be infinitely desired but that good which indeed is infinite: for the better, the more desirable; that therefore most desirable wherein there is infinity of goodness. So that if anything desirable may be infinite, that must needs be the highest of all things that are desired. No good is infinite but only God, therefore He is our felicity and bliss. Moreover, desire tendeth unto union with that it desireth. If, then, in Him we be blessed, it is by force of participation and conjunction with Him. *Again, it is not the possession of any good thing can make them happy which have it, unless they enjoy the*

thing wherewith they are possessed. Then are we happy, therefore, when fully we enjoy God as an object wherein the powers of our souls are satisfied even with everlasting delight ; so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united, we live as it were the life of God. Happiness, therefore, is that state whereby we attain, so far as possibly may be attained, the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired, and containeth in it, after an eminent sort, the contentation of our desires, the highest degree of all our perfection. Of such perfection capable we are not in this life, for while we are in the world we are subject unto sundry imperfections, grief of body, defects of mind ; yea, the best things we do are painful, and the exercise of them grievous, being continued without intermission, so as in those very actions whereby we are especially perfected in this life we are not able to persist, forced we are with very weariness, and that often, to interrupt them ; which tediousness cannot fall into those operations that are in the state of bliss, when our union with God is complete. Complete union with Him must be according unto every power and faculty of our minds, apt to receive so glorious an object. Capable we are of God, both by understanding and will : by understanding as He is that sovereign truth which comprehendeth the rich treasures of all wisdom ; by will, as He is that sea of goodness whereof whoso tasteth shall thirst no more. As the will doth now work upon that object by desire, which is as it were a motion towards the end as yet unobtained, so likewise upon the same hereafter received it shall work also by love. *Appetitus inhiantis fit amor fruentis*, saith St. Augustine. The longing disposition of them that thirst is changed into the sweet affection of them that taste and are replenished. Whereas we now love the thing that is good, but good especially in respect of benefit unto us, we shall then love the thing that is good only or principally for the goodness of beauty in itself. The soul being in this sort, as it is active, perfected by love of that infinite good, shall, as it is receptive, be also perfected with those supernatural passions of joy, peace, and delight. All this endless and everlasting ; which perpetuity, in regard whereof our blessedness is termed "a crown which withereth not," doth neither depend upon the nature of the thing itself nor proceed from any natural necessity that our souls should so exercise themselves for ever in

beholding and loving God, but from the will of God; which doth both freely perfect our nature in so high a degree and continue it so perfected. Under man, no creature in the world is capable of felicity and bliss: first, because their chiefest perfection consisteth in that which is best for them, but not in that which is simply best, as ours doth; secondly, because whatsoever external perfection they tend unto, it is not better than themselves, as ours is. How just occasion have we, therefore, even in this respect, with the prophet, to admire the goodness of God. Lord, what is man that Thou shouldst exalt him above the works of Thy hands, so far as to make Thyself the inheritance of his rest and the substance of his felicity? Now if men had not naturally this desire to be happy, how were it possible that all men should have it? All men have; therefore this desire in man is natural. It is not in our power not to do the same; how should it then be in our power to do it coldly or remissly? So that our desire, being natural, is also in that degree of earnestness whereunto nothing can be added. And is it probable that God should frame the hearts of all men so desirous of that which no man may obtain? It is an axiom of Nature that natural desire cannot utterly be frustrate. This desire of ours, being natural, should be frustrate if that which may satisfy the same were a thing impossible for man to aspire unto. Man doth seek a triple perfection: first, a sensual, consisting in those things which very life itself requireth, either as necessary supplements or as beauties and ornaments thereof; then an intellectual, consisting in those things which none underneath man is either capable of or acquainted with; lastly, a spiritual and divine, consisting in those things whereunto we tend by supernatural means here, but cannot here attain unto them. They that make the first of these three the scope of their whole life are said by the Apostle to have no God but only their belly, to be earthly minded men. Unto the second they bend themselves who seek especially to excel in all such knowledge and virtue as doth most commend men. To this branch belongeth the law of moral and civil perfection. That there is somewhat higher than either of these two, no other proof doth need than the very process of man's desire, which being natural should be frustrate, if there were not some farther thing wherein it might rest at the length contented, which in the former it

cannot do. For man doth not seem to rest satisfied either with fruition of that wherewith his life is preserved, or with performance of such actions as advance him most deservedly in estimation ; but doth further covet, yea, oftentimes manifestly pursue, with great sedulity and earnestness, that which cannot stand him in any stead for vital use, that which exceedeth the reach of sense, yea, somewhat above capacity of reason, somewhat divine and heavenly, which with hidden exultation it rather surmiseth than conceiveth ; somewhat it seeketh, and what that is directly it knoweth not, yet very intensive desire thereof doth so incite it that all other known delights and pleasures are laid aside, they give place to the search of this but only suspected desire. If the soul of man did serve only to give him being in this life, then things appertaining unto this life would content him, as we see they do other creatures ; which creatures, enjoying what they live by, seek no further, but in this contentation do show a kind of acknowledgment that there is no higher good which doth any way belong unto them. With us it is otherwise ; for although the beauties, riches, honours, sciences, virtues, and perfections of all men living were in the present possession of one, yet somewhat beyond and above all this there would still be sought and earnestly thirsted for. So that Nature even in this life doth plainly claim and call for a more divine perfection than either of these two that have been mentioned. This last and highest estate of perfection whereof we speak is received of men in the nature of a reward. Rewards do always presuppose such duties performed as are rewardable. Our natural means, therefore, unto blessedness are our works ; nor is it possible that Nature should ever find any other way to salvation than only this. But examine the works which we do, and since the first foundation of the world what one can say, " My ways are pure " ? Seeing, then, all flesh is guilty of that for which God hath threatened eternally to punish, what possibility is there this way to be saved ? There resteth, therefore, either no way unto salvation, or, if any, then surely a way which is supernatural—a way which could never have entered into the heart of man as much as once to conceive or imagine if God himself had not revealed it extraordinarily ? For which cause we term it the mystery, or secret way of salvation ; and therefore St. Ambrose, in this matter, appealeth justly from man to God, *Cœli mysterium*.

doceat me Deus qui condidit, non homo qui seipsum ignoravit.

“Let God himself that made me, let not man that knows not himself, be my instructor concerning the mystical way to heaven.” “When men of excellent wit,” saith Lactantius, “had wholly betaken themselves unto study, after farewell bidden unto all kind as well of private as public action, they spared no labour that might be spent in the search of truth; holding it a thing of much more price to seek and to find out the reason of all affairs, as well divine as human, than to stick fast in the toil of piling up riches and gathering together heaps of honours. Howbeit they both did fail of their purpose and got not as much as to quit their charges, because truth, which is the secret of the most high God, whose proper handiwork all things are, cannot be compassed with that wit and those senses which are our own. For God and man should be very near neighbours if man’s cogitations were able to take a survey of the counsels and appointments of that Majesty everlasting. Which being utterly impossible, that the eye of man by itself should look into the bosom of divine reason, God did not suffer him, being desirous of the light of wisdom, to stray any longer up and down, and with bootless expense of travel to wander in darkness that had no passage to get out by. His eyes at the length God did open, and bestow upon him the knowledge of the truth by way of donative; to the end that man might both be clearly convicted of folly, and being through error out of the way, have the path that leadeth unto immortality laid plain before him.” Thus far Lactantius Firmianus, to show that God himself is the teacher of the truth, whereby is made known the supernatural way of salvation and law for them to live in that shall be saved. In the natural path of everlasting life, the first beginning is that hability of doing good, which God in the day of man’s creation endued him with; from hence obedience unto the will of his creator, absolute righteousness and integrity in all his actions; and last of all the justice of God rewarding the worthiness of his deserts with the crown of eternal glory. Had Adam continued in his first estate, this had been the way of life unto him and all his posterity. Wherein I confess notwithstanding with the wittiest of the school divines, that if we speak of strict justice, God could *no way have been bound to requite man’s labours in so large and ample manner as human felicity doth import: inasmuch*

as the dignity of this exceedeth so far the others value. But be it that God of His great liberality had determined in lieu of man's endeavours to bestow the same, by the rule of that justice which best beseemeth Him—namely, the justice of one that requireth nothing mincingly, but all with pressed and heaped and even over-enlarged measure: yet could it never hereupon necessarily be gathered, that such justice should add to the nature of that reward the property of everlasting continuance; since possession of bliss, though it should be but for a moment, were an abundant retribution. But we are not now to enter into this consideration, how gracious and bountiful our good God might still appear in so rewarding the sons of men, albeit they should exactly perform whatsoever duty their nature bindeth them unto. Howsoever God did propose this reward, we that were to be rewarded must have done that which is required at our hands; we failing in the one, it were in nature an impossibility that the other should be looked for. The light of Nature is never able to find out any way of obtaining the reward of bliss, but by performing exactly the duties and works of righteousness. From salvation therefore and life all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisdom of God hath revealed a way mystical and supernatural, a way directing unto the same end of life by a course which groundeth itself upon the guiltiness of sin, and through sin desert of condemnation and death. For in this way the first thing is the tender compassion of God respecting us drowned and swallowed-up in misery; the next is redemption out of the same by the precious death and merits of a mighty Saviour, which hath witnessed of himself saying "I am the way," the way that leadeth us from misery into bliss. This supernatural way had God in Himself prepared before all worlds. The way of supernatural duty which to us He hath prescribed, our Saviour in the Gospel of St. John doth note, terming it by an excellency the work of God: "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." Not that God doth require nothing unto happiness at the hands of men saving only a naked belief (for hope and charity we may not exclude): but that without belief all other things are as nothing, and it the ground of those other divine virtues. Concerning faith, the principal object whereof is that eternal verity which hath discovered the treasures of *hidden wisdom in Christ*; concerning hope, the highest object

whereof is that everlasting goodness which in Christ doth quicken the dead; concerning charity, the final object whereof is that incomprehensible beauty which shineth in the countenance of Christ the Son of the living God; concerning these virtues, the first of which beginning here with a weak apprehension of things not seen, endeth with the intuitive vision of God in the world to come; the second beginning here with a trembling expectation of things far removed, and as yet but only heard of, endeth with real and actual fruition of that which no tongue can express; the third, beginning here with a weak inclination of heart towards him unto whom we are not able to approach, endeth with endless union, the mystery whereof is higher than the reach of the thoughts of men; concerning that faith, hope and charity, without which there can be no salvation; was there ever any mention made saving only in that law which God himself hath from heaven revealed? There is not in the world a syllable muttered with certain truth concerning any of these three, more than hath been supernaturally received from the mouth of the eternal God. Laws therefore concerning these things are supernatural, both in respect of the manner of delivering them which is divine, and also in regard of the things delivered, which are such as have not in Nature any cause from which they flow, but were by the voluntary appointment of God ordained besides the course of Nature, to rectify Nature's obliquity withal.

12. When supernatural duties are necessarily exacted, natural are not rejected as needless. The law of God therefore is though principally delivered for instruction in the one, yet fraught with precepts of the other also. The Scripture is fraught even with laws of Nature. Insomuch that Gratian defining natural right (whereby is meant the right which exacteth those general duties, that concern men naturally even as they are men), termeth natural right that which the books of the Law and the Gospel do contain. Neither is it vain that the Scripture aboundeth with so great store of laws in this kind. For they are either such as we of ourselves could not easily have found out, and then the benefit is not small to have them readily set down to our hands; or, if they be so clear and manifest that no man endued with reason can lightly be ignorant of them, yet the spirit as it were borrowing them from the school of Nature as serving to prove things less manifest, and to induce a persuasion of

somewhat which were in itself more hard and dark, unless it should in such sort be cleared, the very applying of them unto cases particular is not without most singular use and profit many ways for men's instruction. Besides, be they plain of themselves or obscure, the evidence of God's own testimony, added unto the natural assent of reason concerning the certainty of them, doth not a little comfort and confirm the same. Wherefore, inasmuch as our actions are conversant about things beset with many circumstances, which cause men of sundry wits to be also of sundry judgments concerning that which ought to be done: requisite it cannot but seem the rule of divine law should herein help our imbecility, that we might the more infallibly understand what is good and what evil. The first principles of the law of Nature are easy, hard it were to find men ignorant of them: but concerning the duty which Nature's law doth require at the hands of men in a number of things particular, so far hath the natural understanding even of sundry whole nations been darkened, that they have not discerned no not gross iniquity to be sin. Again, being so prone as we are to fawn upon ourselves, and to be ignorant as much as may be of our own deformities, without the feeling sense whereof we are most wretched, even so much the more, because not knowing them we cannot as much as desire to have them taken away: how should our festered sores be cured, but that God hath delivered a law as sharp as the two-edged sword, piercing the very closest and most unsearchable corners of the heart, which the law of Nature can hardly, human laws by no means, possible reach unto? Hereby we know even secret concupiscence to be sin, and are made fearful to offend though it be but in a wandering cogitation. Finally, of those things which are for direction of all the parts of our life needful, and not impossible to be discerned by the light of Nature itself, are there not many which few men's natural capacity, and some which no man's hath been able to find out? They are, saith St. Augustine, but a few, and they endued with great ripeness of wit and judgment, free from all such affairs as might trouble their meditations, instructed in the sharpest and the subtlest points of learning, who have, and that very hardly, been able to find out but only the immortality of the soul. The resurrection of the flesh what man did ever at any time dream of, having not heard it otherwise than from the

school of Nature? Whereby it appeareth how much we are bound to yield unto our creator the Father of all mercy eternal thanks, for that He hath delivered His law into the world, a law wherein so many things are laid open clear and manifest; as a light which otherwise would have been buried in darkness, not without the hazard, or rather not with the hazard, but with the certain loss of infinite thousands of souls most undoubtedly now saved. We see, therefore, that our sovereign good is desired naturally; that God, the author of that natural desire, had appointed natural means whereby to fulfil it; that man having utterly disabled his nature unto those means, hath had other revealed from God, and hath received from heaven a law to teach him how that which is desired naturally must now supernaturally be attained; finally, we see that because those later exclude not the former quite and clean as unnecessary, therefore, together with such supernatural duties as could not possibly have been otherwise known to the world, the same law that teacheth them, teacheth also with them such natural duties as could not by light of Nature easily have been known.

13. In the first age of the world God gave laws unto our fathers, and by reason of the number of their days, their memories served instead of books; whereof the manifold imperfections and defects being known to God, He mercifully relieved the same by often putting them in mind of that whereof it behoved them to be specially mindful. In which respect we see how many times one thing hath been iterated unto sundry even of the best and wisest amongst them. After that the lives of men were shortened, means more durable to preserve the laws of God from oblivion and corruption grew in use, not without precise direction from God himself. First, therefore, of Moses, it is said that he wrote all the words of God; not by his own private motion and device: for God taketh this act to Himself, I have written. Furthermore, were not the Prophets following commanded also to do the like? Unto the holy Evangelist St. John how often express charge is given, Scribe, write these things? Concerning the rest of our Lord's disciples, the words of St. Augustine are, *Quicquid ille de suis factis et dictis nos legere voluit, hoc scribendum illis tanquam suis manibus imperavit.* Now although we do not deny it to be a matter merely accidental

unto the law of God to be written ; although writing be not that which addeth authority and strength thereunto : finally, though His laws do require at our hands the same obedience howsoever they be delivered ; His providence, notwithstanding which hath made principal choice of this way to deliver them, who seeth not what cause we have to admire and magnify ? The singular benefit that hath grown un'o the world by receiving the laws of God, even by His own appointment committed unto writing, we are not able to esteem as the value thereof deserveth. When the question, therefore, is whether we be now to seek for any revealed law of God elsewhere than only in the sacred Scripture, whether we do now stand bound in the sight of God to yield to traditions urged by the Church of Rome the same obedience and reverence we do to, His written law, honouring equally, and adoring both as divine : our answer is, No. They that so earnestly plead for the authority of tradition, as if nothing were more safely conveyed than that which spreadeth itself by report, and descendeth by relation of former generations unto the ages that succeed, are not all of them (surely a miracle it were if they should be) so simple, as thus to persuade themselves ; howsoever, if the simple were so persuaded, they could be content perhaps very well to enjoy the benefit, as they account it, of that common error. What hazard the truth is in when it passeth through the hands of report, how maimed and deformed it becometh ; they are not, they cannot possibly be, ignorant. Let them that are indeed of this mind, consider but only that little of things divine, which the heathen have in such sort received. How miserable had the state of the Church of God been long ere this, if wanting the sacred Scripture, we had no record of His laws but only the memory of man, receiving the same by report and relation from his predecessors ? By Scripture it hath in the wisdom of God seemed meet to deliver unto the world much but personally expedient to be practised of certain men ; many deep and profound points of doctrine, as being the main original ground whereupon the precepts of duty depend ; many prophecies the clear performance whereof might confirm the world in belief of things unseen ; many histories to serve as looking-glasses to behold the mercy, the truth, the righteousness of God towards all that faithfully *serve, obey and honour Him* ; yea, many entire meditations

of piety, to be as patterns and precedents in cases of like nature; many things needful for explication, many for application unto particular occasions, such as the providence of God from time to time hath taken to have the several books of His holy ordinance written. Be it then that, together with the principal necessary laws of God, there are sundry other things written, whereof we might happily be ignorant, and yet be saved: What? shall we hereupon think them needless? shall we esteem them as riotous branches wherewith we sometimes behold most pleasant vines overgrown? Surely no more than we judge our hands or our eyes superfluous, or what part soever, which if our bodies did want we might notwithstanding any such defect retain still the complete being of men. As, therefore, a complete man is neither destitute of any part necessary, and hath some parts whereof, though the want could not deprive him of his essence, yet to have them standeth him in singular stead in respect of the special uses for which they serve. In like sort all those writings which contain in them the law of God, all those venerable books of Scripture, all those sacred tomes and volumes of holy writ, they are with such absolute perfection framed that in them there neither wanteth anything, the lack whereof might deprive us of life, nor anything in such wise aboundeth that as being superfluous, unfruitful, and altogether needless, we should think it no loss or danger at all if we did want it.

14. Although the Scripture of God, therefore, be stored with infinite variety of matter in all kinds, although it abound with all sorts of laws, yet the principal intent of Scripture is to deliver the laws of duties supernatural. Oftentimes it hath been in very solemn manner disputed whether all things necessary unto salvation be necessarily set down in the holy Scriptures or no. If we define that necessary unto salvation whereby the way to salvation is in any sort made more plain, apparent, and easy to be known, then is there no part of true philosophy, no art of account, no kind of science rightly so called, but the Scripture must contain it. If only those things be necessary, as surely none else are, without the knowledge and practice whereof it is not the will and pleasure of God to make any ordinary grant of salvation, it may be notwithstanding, and oftentimes hath been demanded, how the books of holy Scripture

contain in them all necessary things, when of things necessary the very chiefest is to know what books we are bound to esteem holy, which point is confessed impossible for the Scripture itself to teach. Whereunto we may answer with truth that there is not in the world any art or science which proposing unto itself an end, as every one doth some end or other, hath been therefore thought defective if it have not delivered simply whatsoever is needful to the same end; but all kinds of knowledge have their certain bounds and limits, each of them presupposeth many necessary things learned in other sciences and known beforehand. He that should take upon him to teach men how to be eloquent in pleading causes must needs deliver unto them whatsoever precepts are requisite unto that end, otherwise he doth not the thing which he taketh upon him. Seeing then no man can plead eloquently unless he be able first to speak, it followeth that ability of speech is in this case a thing most necessary. Notwithstanding every man would think it ridiculous that he which undertaketh by writing to instruct an orator should therefore deliver all the precepts of grammar, because his profession is to deliver precepts necessary unto eloquent speech, yet so that they which are to receive them be taught beforehand so much of that which is thereunto necessary as comprehendeth the skill of speaking. In like sort, albeit Scripture do profess to contain in it all things which are necessary unto salvation, yet the meaning cannot be simply of all things which are necessary, but all things that are necessary in some certain kind or form; as all things that are necessary, and either could not at all, or could not easily be known by the light of natural discourse; all things which are necessary to be known that we may be saved, but known with presupposal of knowledge concerning certain principles, whereof it receiveth us already persuaded, and then instructeth us in all the residue that are necessary. In the number of these principles one is the sacred authority of Scripture. Being therefore persuaded by other means that these Scriptures are the oracles of God, themselves do then teach us the rest, and lay before us all the duties which God requireth at our hands as necessary unto salvation. Further, there hath been some doubt likewise whether containing in Scripture do import express setting down in plain terms, or *else comprehending* in such sort that by reason we may

from thence conclude all things which are necessary. Against the former of these two constructions instance hath sundry ways been given. For our belief in the Trinity, the co-eternity of the Son of God with His Father, the proceeding of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, the duty of baptizing infants, these, with such other principal points, the necessity whereof is by none denied, are notwithstanding in Scripture nowhere to be found by express literal mention, only deduced they are out of Scripture by collection. This kind of comprehension in Scripture being therefore received, still there is no doubt how far we are to proceed by collection before the full and complete measure of things necessary be made up. For let us not think that as long as the world doth endure the wit of man shall be able to sound the bottom of that which may be concluded out of the Scripture, especially if things contained by collection do so far extend as to draw in whatsoever may be at any time out of Scripture, but probably and conjecturally surmised. But let necessary collection be made requisite, and we may boldly deny that of all those things which at this day are with so great necessity urged upon this Church under the name of reformed Church discipline, there is any one which their books hitherto have made manifest to be contained in the Scripture. Let them, if they can, allege but one properly belonging to their cause, and not common to them and us, and show the deduction thereof out of Scripture to be necessary. It hath been already showed how all things necessary unto salvation in such sort as before we have maintained must needs be possible for men to know, and that many things are in such sort necessary, the knowledge whereof is by the light of Nature impossible to be attained. Whereupon it followeth that either all flesh is excluded from possibility of salvation, which to think were most barbarous, or else that God hath by supernatural means revealed the way of life so far forth as doth suffice. For this cause God hath so many times and ways spoken to the sons of men. Neither hath He by speech only, but by writing also instructed and taught His Church. The cause of writing hath been to the end that things by Him revealed unto the world might have the longer continuance, and the greater certainty of assurance; by how much that which standeth on record hath in both *those respects* pre-eminence above that which passeth from

hand to hand and hath no pens but the tongues, no book but the ears of men to record it. The several books of Scripture having had each some several occasion and particular purpose which caused them to be written, the contents thereof are according to the exigence of that special end whereunto they are intended. Hereupon it groweth that every book of Holy Scripture doth take out of all kinds of truth, natural, historical, foreign, supernatural, so much as the matter handled requireth. Now, forasmuch as there hath been reasons alleged sufficient to conclude that all things necessary unto salvation must be made known, and that God himself hath, therefore, revealed His will, because otherwise men could not have known so much as is necessary; His surceasing to speak to the world since the publishing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the delivery of the same in writing, is unto us a manifest token that the way of salvation is now sufficiently opened, and that we need no other means for our full instruction than God hath already furnished us withal. The main drift of the whole New Testament is that which St. John setteth down as the purpose of his own history, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God, and that in believing ye might have life through His name." The drift of the Old, that which the Apostle mentioneth to Timothy, "The Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation." So that the general end both of Old and New is one, the difference between them consisting in this, that the Old did make wise by teaching salvation through Christ that should come, the New, by teaching that Christ the Saviour is come, and that Jesus whom the Jews did crucify, and whom God did raise again from the dead, is He. When the Apostle, therefore, affirmeth unto Timothy that the Old was able to make him wise to salvation, it was not his meaning that the Old alone can do this unto us which live since the publication of the New. For he speaketh with presupposal of the doctrine of Christ known also unto Timothy, and, therefore, first it is said, "Continue thou in those things which thou hast learned and art persuaded, knowing of whom thou hast been taught them." Again, those Scriptures he granteth were able to make him wise to salvation, but he addeth, "through the faith which is in Christ." Wherefore, without the *doctrine of the New Testament* teaching that Christ hath

wrought the redemption of the world, which redemption the Old did foreshow He should work, it is not the former alone which can on our behalf perform so much as the Apostle doth avouch, who presupposeth this when he magnifieth that so highly. And as his words concerning the books of ancient Scripture do not take place but with presupposal of the Gospel of Christ embraced, so our own words also, when we extol the complete sufficiency of the whole entire body of the Scripture, must in like sort be understood with this caution, that the benefit of Nature's light be not thought excluded as unnecessary because the necessity of a diviner light is magnified. There is in Scripture, therefore, no defect but that any man, what place or calling soever he hold in the Church of God, may have thereby the light of his natural understanding so perfected, that the one being relieved by the other, there can want no part of needful instruction unto any good work which God himself requireth, be it natural or supernatural, belonging simply unto men as men, or unto men as they are united in whatsoever kind of society. It sufficeth, therefore, that Nature and Scripture do serve in such full sort that they, both jointly, and not severally either of them, be so complete that unto everlasting felicity we need not the knowledge of anything more than these two may easily furnish our minds with on all sides; and, therefore, they which add traditions as a part of supernatural necessary truth have not the truth, but are in error. For they only plead that whatsoever God revealeth as necessary for all Christian men to do or believe, the same we ought to embrace, whether we have received it by writing or otherwise, which no man denieth; when that which they should confirm who claim so great reverence unto traditions is, that the same traditions are necessarily to be acknowledged divine and holy. For we do not reject them only because they are not in the Scripture, but because they are neither in Scripture nor can otherwise sufficiently by any reason be proved to be of God. That which is of God, and may be evidently proved to be so, we deny not but it hath in his kind, although unwritten, yet the selfsame force and authority with the written laws of God. It is by ours acknowledged, "that the apostles did in every Church institute and ordain some rites and customs serving for the seemliness of Church regiment, which rites and customs they have not committed unto writing."

Those rites and customs being known to be apostolical, and having the nature of things changeable, were no less to be accounted of in the Church than other things of the like degree, that is to say, capable in like sort of alteration, although set down in the Apostle's writings. For both being known to be apostolical, it is not the manner of delivering them unto the Church, but the author from whom they proceed, which doth give them their force and credit.

15. Laws being imposed, either by each man upon himself, or by a public society upon the particulars thereof, or by all the nations of men upon every several society, or by the Lord himself upon any or every of these, there is not amongst these four kinds any one but containeth sundry both natural and positive laws. Impossible it is but that they should fall into a number of gross errors who only take such laws for positive as have been made or invented of men, and holding this position hold also that all positive and none but positive laws are mutable. Laws natural do always bind, laws positive not so, but only after they have been expressly and wittingly imposed. Laws positive there are in every of those kinds before mentioned. As in the first kind the promises which we have passed unto men, and the vows we have made unto God, for these are laws which we tie ourselves unto, and till we have so tied ourselves they bind us not. Laws positive in the second kind are such as the civil constitutions peculiar unto each particular commonweal. In the third kind the law of heraldry in war is positive; and in the last all the judicials which God gave unto the people of Israel to observe. And although no laws but positive be mutable, yet all are not mutable which be positive. Positive laws are either permanent or else changeable, according as the matter itself is concerning which they were first made. Whether God or man be the maker of them, alteration they so far forth admit as the matter doth exact. Laws that concern supernatural duties are all positive, and either concern men supernaturally as men, or else as parts of a supernatural society, which society we call the Church. To concern men as men supernaturally, is to concern them as duties which belong of necessity to all, and yet could not have been known by any to belong unto them unless God had opened them Himself, inasmuch as they do not depend upon any natural ground at all out of which they may be deduced.

but are appointed of God to supply the defect of those natural ways of salvation, by which we are not now able to attain thereunto. The Church being a supernatural society doth differ from natural societies in this: that the persons unto whom we associate ourselves in the one are men simply considered as men, but they to whom we be joined in the other are God, angels, and holy men. Again, the Church being both a society and a society supernatural, although as it is a society it have the selfsame original grounds which other politic societies have, namely, the natural inclination which all men have unto sociable life, and consent to some certain bond of association, which bond is the law that appointeth what kind of order they shall be associated in; yet unto the Church as it is a society supernatural this is peculiar, that part of the bond of their association which belong to the Church of God, must be a law supernatural, which God himself hath revealed concerning that kind of worship which His people shall do unto Him. The substance of the service of God, therefore, so far forth as it hath in it anything more than the law of reason doth teach, may not be invented of men as it is amongst the heathens, but must be received from God himself, as always it hath been in the Church, saving only when the Church hath been forgetful of her duty. Wherefore to end with a general rule concerning all the laws which God hath tied men unto, those laws divine that belong, whether naturally or supernaturally, either to men as men, or to men as they live in politic society, or to men as they are of that politic society which is the Church, without any further respect had unto any such variable accident as the state of men, and of societies of men, and of the Church itself, in this world is subject unto; all laws that so belong unto men they belong for ever, yea, although they be positive laws, unless, being positive, God himself which made them alter them. The reason is because the subject, or matter of laws in general, is thus far forth constant: which matter is that for the ordering whereof laws were instituted, and, being instituted, are not changeable without cause, neither can they have cause of change when that which gave them their first institution remaineth for ever one and the same. On the other side, laws that were made for men, or societies, or Churches, in regard of *their being such as they do not always continue, but may*

perhaps be clean otherwise a while after, and so may require to be otherwise ordered than before; the laws of God himself, which are of this nature, no man endued with common-sense will ever deny to be of a different constitution from the former, in respect of the one's constancy and the mutability of the other. And this doth seem to have been the very cause why St. John doth so peculiarly term the doctrine that teacheth salvation by Jesus Christ, *Evangelium æternum*, an eternal gospel, because there can be no reason wherefore the publishing thereof should be taken away, and any other instead of it proclaimed, as long as the world doth continue; whereas, the whole law of rites and ceremonies, although delivered with so great solemnity, is notwithstanding clean abrogated, inasmuch as it had but temporary cause of God's ordaining it. But that we may at length conclude this first general introduction unto the nature and original birth, as of all other laws, so likewise of those which the sacred Scripture containeth concerning the author whereof, even infidels have confessed that he can neither err nor deceive; albeit about things easy and manifest unto all men by common-sense there needeth no higher consultation, because as a man whose wisdom is in weighty affairs admired, would take it in some disdain to have his counsel solemnly asked about a toy, so the meanness of some things is such that to search the Scripture of God for the ordering of them were to derogate from the reverend authority and dignity of the Scripture, no less than they do by whom Scriptures are in ordinary talk very idly applied unto vain and childish trifles; yet better it were to be superstitious than profane; to take from thence our direction even in all things great or small than to wade through matters of principal weight and moment, without ever caring what the law of God hath either for or against our designs. Concerning the custom of the very Paynims thus much Strabo witnesseth, "Men that are civil do lead their lives after one common law appointing them what to do. For that otherwise a multitude should, with harmony amongst themselves, concur in the doing of one thing (for this is civilly to live), or that they should in any sort manage community of life, it is not possible. Now laws or statutes are of two sorts, for they are either received from gods or else from men. And our *ancient predecessors* did surely most honour and reverence

that which was from the gods, for which cause consultation with oracles was a thing very usual and frequent in their times." Did they make so much account of the voice of their gods, which in truth were no gods, and shall we neglect the precious benefit of conference with those oracles of the true and living God, whereof so great store is left to the Church, and whereunto there is so free, so plain, and so easy access for all men? "By Thy Commandments" (this was David's confession unto God) "Thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies." Again, "I have had more understanding than all my teachers, because Thy testimonies are my meditations." What pains would not they have bestowed in the study of these books, who travelled sea and land to gain the treasure of some few days' talk with men whose wisdom the world did make any reckoning of? That little which some of the heathens did chance to hear concerning such matter as the sacred Scripture plentifully containeth, they did in wonderful sort affect; their speeches as oft as they make mention thereof are strange, and such as themselves could not utter as they did other things, but still acknowledged that their wits, which did everywhere else conquer hardness, were with profoundness here over-matched. Wherefore, seeing that God hath endued us with sense, to the end that we might perceive such things as this present life doth need, and with reason least that which sense cannot reach unto, being both now and also in regard of a future estate hereafter necessary to be known, should lie obscure; finally, with the heavenly support of a prophetic revelation, which doth open those hidden mysteries that reason could never have been able to find out, or to have known the necessity of them unto our everlasting good; use we the precious gifts of God unto His glory and honour that gave them, seeking by all means to know what the will of our God is, what righteous before Him, in His sight what holy, perfect, and good, that we may truly and faithfully do it.

16. Thus far, therefore, we have endeavoured in part to open of what nature and force laws are, according unto their several kinds: the law which God with Himself hath eternally set down to follow in His own works; the law which He hath made for His creatures to keep, the law of natural and necessary agents; the law which *angels in heaven obey*; the law whereunto, by the light of

reason, men find themselves bound in that they are men ; the law which they make, by composition, for multitudes and politic societies of men to be guided by ; the law which belongeth unto each nation, the law that concerneth the fellowship of all ; and lastly, the law which God himself hath supernaturally revealed. It might, peradventure, have been more popular and more plausible to vulgar ears, if this first discourse had been spent in extolling the force of laws, in showing the great necessity of them when they are good, and in aggravating their offence by whom public laws are injuriously traduced. But forasmuch as with such kind of matter the passions of men are rather stirred one way or other, than their knowledge anyway set forward unto the trial of that whereof there is doubt made, I have, therefore, turned aside from that beaten path and chosen, though a less easy, yet a more profitable, way in regard of the end we propose. Lest, therefore, any man should marvel whereunto all these things tend, the drift and purpose of all is this : even to show in what manner as every good and perfect gift, so this very gift of good and perfect laws is derived from the Father of lights ; to teach men a reason why just and reasonable laws are of so great force, of so great use in the world ; and to inform their minds with some method of reducing the laws whereof there is present controversy unto their first original causes, that so it may be in every particular ordinance thereby the better discerned whether the same be reasonable, just, and righteous or no. Is there anything which can either be thoroughly understood, or soundly judged of, till the very first causes and principles from which originally it springeth be made manifest ? If all parts of knowledge have been thought by wise men to be then most orderly delivered and proceeded in, when they are drawn to their first original, seeing that our whole question concerneth the quality of ecclesiastical laws, let it not seem a labour superfluous that in the entrance thereunto all these several kinds of laws have been considered, inasmuch as they all concur as principles, they all have their forcible operations therein, although not all in like apparent and manifest manner. By means whereof it cometh to pass that the force which they have is not observed of many. Easier a great deal it is for men by law to be taught what they ought to do, than instructed how to judge as they should do of law ; the one being a

thing which belongeth generally unto all, the other such as none but the wiser and more judicious sort can perform. Yea, the wisest are always touching this point the readiest to acknowledge, that, soundly to judge of a law is the weightiest thing which any man can take upon him. But if we will give judgment of the laws under which we live, first let that law eternal be always before our eyes, as being of principal force and moment to breed in religious minds a dutiful estimation of all laws the use and benefit whereof we see, because there can be no doubt but that laws apparently good are (as it were) things copied out of the very tables of that high everlasting law, even as the book of that law hath said concerning itself, "By me kings reign, and by me princes decree justice." Not as if men did behold that book and accordingly frame their laws, but because it worketh in them, because it discovereth and (as it were) readeth itself to the world by them, when the laws which they make are righteous. Furthermore, although we perceive not the goodness of laws made, nevertheless since things in themselves may have that which we, peradventure, discern not; should not this breed a fear in our hearts how we speak or judge in the worse part concerning that, the unadvised disgrace whereof may be no mean dishonour to him, towards whom we profess all submission and awe? Surely there must be very manifest iniquity in laws, against which we shall be able to justify our contumelious invectives. The chiefest root whereof, when we use them without cause, is ignorance how laws inferior are derived from that supreme or highest law. The first that receive impression from thence are natural agents, the law of whose operations might be haply thought less pertinent when the question is about laws for human actions, but that in those very actions which most spiritually and supernaturally concern men, the rules and axioms of natural operations have their force. What can be more immediate to our salvation than our persuasion concerning the law of Christ towards His Church? What greater assurance of love towards His Church than the knowledge of that mystical union whereby the Church is become as near unto Christ as any one part of His flesh is unto other? That the Church being in such sort His, He must needs protect *it*; what proof more strong, than if a manifest law so require, *which law it is not possible for Christ to violate?* And

what other law doth the Apostle for this allege but such as is both common unto Christ with us, and unto us with other things natural, "No man hateth his own flesh, but doth love and cherish it." The axioms of that law, therefore, whereby natural agents are guided, have their use in the moral, yea, even in the spiritual actions of men, and consequently in all laws belonging unto men howsoever. Neither are the angels themselves so far severed from us in their kind and manner of working, but that between the law of their heavenly operations, and the actions of men in this our state of mortality, such correspondence there is as maketh it expedient to know in some sort the one for the other's more perfect direction. Would angels acknowledge themselves fellow-servants with the sons of men, but that both having one Lord there must be some kind of law which is one and the same to both, whereunto their obedience being perfecter is to our weaker both a pattern and a spur. Or would the apostles, speaking of that which belongeth unto saints, as they are linked together in the bond of spiritual society, so often make mention how angels are therewith delighted if in things publicly done by the Church we are not somewhat to respect what the angels of heaven do? Yea so far hath the Apostle St. Paul proceeded, as to signify that even about the outward orders of the Church which serve but for comeliness, some regard is to be had of angels; who best like us when we are most like unto them in all parts of decent demeanour. So that the law of angels we cannot judge altogether impertinent unto the affairs of the Church of God. Our largeness of speech how men do find out what things reason bindeth them of necessity to observe, and what it guideth them to choose in things which are left as arbitrary; the care we have had to declare the different nature of laws which severally concern all men, from such as belong unto men either civilly or spiritually associated, such as pertain to the fellowship which nations, or which Christian nations have amongst themselves, and in the last place such as concerning every or any of these, God himself hath revealed by His Holy Word; all serveth but to make manifest, that as the actions of men are of sundry distinct kinds, so the laws thereof must accordingly be distinguished. There are in men operations some natural, some rational, some supernatural, some politic, some finally ecclesiastical. Which if

we measure not each by his own proper law, whereas the things themselves are so different; there will be in our understanding and judgment of them confusion. As that first error sheweth whereon our opposites in this cause have grounded themselves. For as they rightly maintain, that God must be glorified in all things, and that the actions of men cannot tend unto His glory, unless they be framed after His law; so it is their error, to think that the only law which God hath appointed unto men in that behalf is the sacred Scripture. By that which we work naturally, as when we breathe, sleep, move, we set forth the glory of God as natural agents do, albeit we have no express purpose to make that our end, nor any advised determination therein to follow a law, but do that we do (for the most part) not as much as thinking thereon. In reasonable and moral actions another law taketh place, a law by the observation whereof we glorify God in such sort, as no creature else under man is able to do; because other creatures have not judgment to examine the quality of that which is done by them, and therefore in that they do, they neither can accuse nor approve themselves. Men do both, as the Apostle teacheth; yea those men which have no written law of God to show what is good or evil, carry written in their hearts the universal law of mankind, the law of reason whereby they judge as by a rule which God hath given unto all men for that purpose. The law of reason doth somewhat direct men how to honour God as their Creator; but how to glorify God in such sort as is required to the end He may be an everlasting Saviour, this we are taught by divine law, which law both ascertaineth the truth, and supplieth unto us the want of that other law. So that in moral actions, divine law helpeth exceedingly the law of reason to guide man's life; but in supernatural it alone guideth. Proceed we further, let us place man in some public society with others, whether civil or spiritual; and in this case there is no remedy but we must add yet a further law. For although even here likewise the laws of Nature and reason be of necessary use, yet somewhat over and besides them is necessary, namely, human and positive law, together with that law which is of commerce between grand societies, the law of nations and of nations Christian. For which cause the law of God hath likewise said, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." The public power of all

societies is above every soul contained in the same societies. And the principal use of that power is to give laws unto all that are under it; which laws in such case we must obey, unless there be reason showed which may necessarily enforce, that the law of reason or of God doth enjoin the contrary. Because except our own private, and but probable resolutions, be by the law of public determinations overruled, we take away all possibility of sociable life in the world. A plainer example whereof than ourselves we cannot have. How cometh it to pass that we are at this present day so rent with mutual contentions, and that the Church is so much troubled about the polity of the Church? No doubt if men had been willing to learn how many laws their actions in this life are subject unto, and what the true force of each law is, all these controversies might have died the very day they were first brought forth. It is both commonly said, and truly, that the best men otherwise are not always the best in regard of society. The reason whereof is, for that the law of men's actions is one, if they be respected only as men; and another, when they are considered as parts of a politic body. Many men there are, than whom nothing is more commendable when they are singled. And yet in society with others, none less fit to answer the duties which are looked for at their hands. Yea, I am persuaded, that of them with whom in this cause we strive, there are whose betters among men would be hardly found, if they did not live amongst men, but in some wilderness by themselves. The cause of which their disposition so unframeable unto societies wherein they live, is for that they discern not aright what place and force these several kinds of laws ought to have in all their actions. Is there question either concerning the regiment of the Church in general, or about conformity between one Church and another, or of ceremonies, offices, powers, jurisdictions in our own Church? Of all these things they judge by that rule which they frame to themselves with some show of probability; and what seemeth in that sort convenient, the same they think themselves bound to practise, the same by all means they labour mightily to uphold; whatsoever any law of man to the contrary hath determined they weigh it not. Thus, by following the law of private reason, where the law of public should take place, they breed disturbance. For the better inuring therefore of men's minds with the true distinction of laws

and of their several force, according to the different kind and quality of our actions, it shall not peradventure be amiss to show in some one example how they all take place. To seek no further, let but that be considered than which there is not anything more familiar unto us, our food. What things are food, and what are not, we judge naturally by sense, neither need we any other law to be our director in that behalf than the selfsame which is common unto us with beasts. But when we come to consider of food, as of a benefit which God of His bounteous goodness hath provided for all things living; the law of reason doth here require the duty of thankfulness at our hands, towards Him at whose hands we have it. And lest appetite in the use of food should lead us beyond that which is meet, we owe in this case obedience to that law of reason which teacheth mediocrity in meats and drinks. The same things divine law teacheth also, as at large we have showed it doth all parts of moral duty, whereunto we all of necessity stand bound in regard of the life to come. But of certain kinds of food the Jews sometimes had, and we ourselves likewise have a mystical, religious, and supernatural use; they of their paschal lamb and oblations; we of our bread and wine in the Eucharist; which use none but divine law could institute. Now as we live in civil society, the state of the commonwealth wherein we live, both may and doth require certain laws concerning food; which laws, saving only that we are members of the commonwealth where they are of force, we should not need to respect as rules of action, whereas now in their place and kind they must be respected and obeyed. Yea, the selfsame matter is also a subject wherein sometime ecclesiastical laws have place; so that unless we will be authors of confusion in the Church, our private discretion, which otherwise might guide us a contrary way, must here submit itself to be that way guided, which the public judgment of the Church hath thought better. In which case that of Zonaras concerning fasts may be remembered. "Fastings are good, but let good things be done in good and convenient manner. He that transgresseth in his fasting the orders of the holy fathers," the positive laws of the Church of Christ, must be plainly told "that good things do lose the grace of their goodness, when in good sort they are not performed." And as here men's private fancies *must give place* to the higher judgment of that Church

which is in authority a mother over them: so the very actions of whole Churches, have in regard of commerce and fellowship with other Churches, been subject to laws concerning food, the contrary unto which laws had else been thought more convenient for them to observe; as by that order of abstinence from strangled and blood may appear; an order grounded upon that fellowship which the Churches of the Gentiles had with the Jews. Thus we see how even one and the self-same thing is under divers considerations conveyed through many laws, and that to measure by any one kind of law all the actions of men, were to confound the admirable order wherein God hath disposed all laws, each as in nature, so in degree, distinct from other. Wherefore that here we may briefly end, of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world, all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power, both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever though each in different sort and inanner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

The Second Book.

1. An answer to their first proof brought out of Scripture. Prov. ii. 9.
2. To their second. 1 Cor. x. 31.
3. To their third. 1 Tim. iv. 5.
4. To their fourth. Rom. xiv. 23.
5. To their proofs out of Fathers, who dispute negatively from the authority of Holy Scripture.
6. To their proof by the Scriptures' custom of disputing from divine authority negatively.
7. An examination of their opinion concerning the force of arguments taken from human authority for the ordering of men's actions and persuasions.
8. A declaration what the truth is in this matter.

As that which in the title hath been proposed for the matter whereof we treat is only the ecclesiastical law whereby we are governed, so neither is it my purpose to maintain any other thing than that which therein truth and reason shall

approve. For concerning the dealings of men who administer government, and unto whom the execution of that law belongeth; they have their Judge who sitteth in heaven, and before whose tribunal seat they are accountable for whatsoever abuse or corruption which (being worthily misliked in this Church) the want either of care or of conscience in them hath bred. We are no patrons of those things, therefore, the best defence whereof is speedy redress and amendment. That which is of God we defend, to the uttermost of that ability which He hath given; that which is otherwise, let it wither even in the root from whence it hath sprung. Wherefore all these abuses being severed and set apart, which rise from the corruption of men, and not from the laws themselves, come we to those things which in the very whole entire form of our Church Polity have been (as we persuade ourselves) injuriously blamed by them who endeavour to overthrow the same, and instead thereof to establish a much worse; only through a strong misconceit they have that the same is grounded on divine authority. Now whether it be that through an earnest longing desire to see things brought to a peaceable end, I do but imagine the matters whereof we contend to be fewer than indeed they are; or else for that in truth they are fewer when they come to be discussed by reason, than otherwise they seem, when by heat of contention they are divided into many slips, and of every branch an heap is made: surely as now we have drawn them together, choosing out those things which are requisite to be severally all discussed, and omitting such mean specialities as are likely (without any great labour) to fall afterwards of themselves; I know no cause why either the number or the length of these controversies should diminish our hope of seeing them end with concord and love on all sides, which of His infinite love and goodness the Father of all peace and unity grant. Unto which scope that our endeavour may the more directly tend it seemeth fittest that first those things be examined which are as seeds from whence the rest that ensue have grown. And of such, the most general is that, wherewith we are here to make our entrance; a question not moved (I think) anywhere in other Churches, and, therefore, in ours the more likely to be soon (I trust) determined; the rather for that it hath grown from no other root than only a desire to enlarge the necessary use of the Word of God, which

desire hath begotten an error enlarging it further than (as we are persuaded) soundness of truth will bear. For whereas God hath left sundry kinds of laws unto men, and by all those laws the actions of men are in some sort directed, they hold that one only law, the Scripture, must be the rule to direct in all things, even so far as to the "taking up of a rush or straw." About which point there should not need any question to grow, and that which is grown might presently end, if they did yield but to these two restraints; the first is, not to extend the actions whereof they speak so low as that instance doth import, of taking up a straw, but rather keep themselves at the least within the compass of moral actions, actions which have in them vice or virtue; the second, not to exact at our hands for every action the knowledge of some place of Scripture out of which we stand bound to deduce it, as by diverse testimonies they seek to enforce; but rather as the truth is, so to acknowledge, that it sufficeth if such actions be framed according to the law of reason; the general axioms, rules, and principles of which law being so frequent in Holy Scripture there is no let but in that regard, even out of Scripture such duties may be deduced by some kind of consequence (as by long circuit of deduction it may be that even all truth out of any truth may be concluded); howbeit no man bound in such sort to deduce all his actions out of Scripture, as if either the place be to him unknown whereon they may be concluded, or the reference unto that place not presently considered of, the action shall in that respect be condemned as unlawful. In this we dissent, and this we are presently to examine.

1. In all parts of knowledge rightly so termed, things most general are most strong: thus it must be, inasmuch as the certainty of our persuasion touching particulars dependeth altogether upon the credit of those generalities out of which they grow. Albeit, therefore, every cause admit not such infallible evidence of proof as leaveth no possibility of doubt or scruple behind it, yet they who claim the general assent of the whole world unto that which they teach, and do not fear to give very hard and heavy sentence upon as many as refuse to embrace the same, must have special regard that their first foundations and grounds be more than slender probabilities. This whole question which hath been moved about the kind of Church regiment we could not but for our own resolution's sake endeavour to

unrip and sift, following therein as near as we might the conduct of that judicial method which serveth best for invention of truth. By means whereof having found this the head theorem of all their discourses, who plead for the change of ecclesiastical government in England, namely, "That the Scripture of God is in such sort the rule of human actions, that simply whatsoever we do, and are not by it directed thereunto, the same is sin;" we hold it necessary that the proofs hereof be weighed, be they of weight sufficient or otherwise it is not ours to judge and determine; only what difficulties there are, which as yet withhold our assent, till we be further and better satisfied, I hope no indifferent amongst them will scorn or refuse to hear. First, therefore, whereas they allege that wisdom doth teach men every good way, and have thereupon inferred that no way is good in any kind of action unless wisdom do by Scripture lead unto it, see they not plainly how they restrain the manifold ways which wisdom hath to teach men by, unto one only way of teaching which is by Scripture? The bounds of wisdom are large, and within them much is contained. Wisdom was Adam's instructor in Paradise; wisdom endued the fathers, who lived before the law, with the knowledge of holy things; by the wisdom of the law of God, David attained to excel others in understanding; and Solomon likewise to excel David by the selfsame wisdom of God—teaching him many things besides the law. The ways of well-doing are, in number, even as many as are the kinds of voluntary actions, so that whatsoever we do in this world and may do it ill, we show ourselves therein by well-doing to be wise. Now, if wisdom did teach men by Scripture not only all the ways that are right and good in some certain kind, according to that of St. Paul concerning the use of Scripture, but did simply, without any manner of exception, restraint, or distinction, teach every way of doing well, there is no art but Scripture should teach it, because every art doth teach the way how to do something or other well. To teach men therefore wisdom professeth, and to teach them every good way, but not every good way by one way of teaching. Whatsoever either man on earth, or the angels of heaven do know, it is as a drop of that unemptiable fountain of wisdom; *which wisdom* hath diversely imparted her treasures unto *the world*. As her ways are of sundry kinds, so her manner

of teaching is not merely one and the same. Some things she openeth by the sacred books of Scripture, some things by the glorious works of Nature ; with some things she inspireth them from above by spiritual influence, in some things she leadeth and traineth them only by worldly experience and practice. We may not so in any one special kind admire her, that we disgrace her in any other, but let all her ways be according unto their place and degree adored.

2. That "all things be done to the glory of God," the blessed Apostle (it is true) exhorteth. The glory of God is the admirable excellency of that virtue divine which, being made manifest, causeth men and angels to extol His greatness, and in regard thereof to fear Him. By being glorified, it is not meant that He doth receive any augmentation of glory at our hands, but His name we glorify when we testify our acknowledgment of His glory. Which, albeit we most effectually do by the virtue of obedience, nevertheless it may be, perhaps, a question, whether St. Paul did mean that we sin as oft as ever we go about anything, without an express intent and purpose to obey God therein. He saith of himself, "I do in all things please all men, seeking not mine own commodity, but rather the good of many, that they may be saved." Shall it hereupon be thought that St. Paul did not move either hand or foot, but with express intent even thereby to further the common salvation of men? We move, we sleep, we take the cup at the hand of our friend, a number of things we oftentimes do, only to satisfy some natural desire, without present, express and actual reference unto any commandment of God. Unto His glory even these things are done which we naturally perform, and not only that which morally and spiritually we do. For, by every effect proceeding from the most concealed instincts of nature His power is made manifest. But it doth not therefore follow that of necessity we shall sin, unless we expressly intend this in every such particular. But be it a thing which requireth no more than only our general presupposed willingness to please God in all things, or be it a matter wherein we cannot so glorify the name of God as we should without an actual intent to do Him in that particular some special obedience, yet for anything there is in this sentence *alleged to the contrary*, God may be glorified by obedience,

and obeyed by performance of His will, and His will be performed with an actual intelligent desire to fulfil that law which maketh known what His will is, although no special clause or sentence of Scripture be in every such action set before men's eyes to warrant it. For Scripture is not the only law whereby God hath opened His will touching all things that may be done, but there are other kind of laws which notify the will of God, as in the former book hath been proved at large; nor is there any law of God whereunto He doth not account our obedience His glory. "Do therefore all things unto the glory of God," saith the apostle, "be inoffensive both to the Jews and Grecians, and the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own commodity, but many's that they may be saved." In the least thing done disobediently towards God, or offensively against the good of men whose benefit we ought to seek for as for our own, we plainly show that we do not acknowledge God to be such as indeed He is; and consequently that we glorify Him not. This the blessed Apostle teacheth: but doth any Apostle teach, that we cannot glorify God otherwise, than only in doing what we find that God in Scripture commandeth us to do? The Churches dispersed amongst the heathen in the east part of the world, are by the Apostle St. Peter exhorted to have their "conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which spake evil of them as of evildoers, might by the good works which they should see, glorify God in the day of visitation." As long as that which Christians did was good, and no way subject unto just reproof, their virtuous conversation was a mean to work the heathen's conversion unto Christ. Seeing, therefore, this had been a thing altogether impossible, but that infidels themselves did discern, in matters of life and conversation, when believers did well, and when otherwise; when they glorified their heavenly Father, and when not: it followeth that some things wherein God is glorified, may be some other way known, than only by the sacred Scripture; of which Scripture the Gentiles being utterly ignorant, did notwithstanding judge rightly of the quality of Christian men's actions. Most certain it is that nothing but only sin doth dishonour God. So that to glorify Him in all things, is to do nothing whereby the name of God may be blasphemed; nothing whereby the salvation of Jew or Grecian or any in the Church of Christ may be

let or hindered ; nothing whereby His law is transgressed. But the question is, whether only Scripture do show whatsoever God is glorified in.

3. And though meats and drinks be said to be sanctified by the word of God and by prayer, yet neither is this a reason sufficient to prove, that by Scripture we must of necessity be directed in every light and common thing which is incident into any part of man's life. Only it sheweth that unto us the word, that is to say, the Gospel of Christ, having not delivered any such difference of things clean and unclean, as the law of Moses did unto the Jews, there is no cause but that we may use indifferently all things, as long as we do not (like swine) take the benefit of them, without a thankful acknowledgment of His liberality and goodness, by whose providence they are enjoyed : and therefore the Apostle gave warning beforehand to take heed of such as should enjoin to " abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, by them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, because it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." The Gospel, by not making many things unclean, as the law did, hath sanctified those things generally to all, which particularly each man unto himself must sanctify by a reverend and holy use : which will hardly be drawn so far, as to serve their purpose, who have imagined the word in such sort to sanctify all things, that neither food can be tasted, nor raiment put on, nor in the world anything done, but this deed must needs be sin in them, which do not first know it appointed unto them by Scripture before they do it.

4. But to come unto that which of all other things in Scripture is most stood upon ; that place of St. Paul, they say, is of all other most clear, where speaking of those things which are called indifferent, in the end he concludeth, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. But faith is not but in respect of the word of God. Therefore whatsoever is not done by the word of God is sin. Whereunto we answer, that albeit the name of faith being properly and strictly taken, it must needs have reference unto some uttered word, as the object of belief ; nevertheless, since the ground of credit is the credibility of things credited, and things are *made credible*, either by the known condition and quality

of the utterer, or by the manifest likelihood of truth which they have in themselves; hereupon it riseth, that whatsoever we are persuaded of, the same we are generally said to believe. In which generality the object of faith may not so narrowly be restrained, as if the same did extend no further than to the only Scriptures of God. "Though," saith our Saviour, "ye believe not me, believe my works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." The other disciples said unto Thomas, "We have seen the Lord;" but his answer unto them was, "Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into them, I will not believe." Can there be anything more plain than that which by these two sentences appeareth, namely, that there may be a certain belief grounded upon other assurance than Scripture; anything more clear than that we are said not only to believe the things which we know by another's relation, but even whatsoever we are certainly persuaded of, whether it be by reason or by sense? Forasmuch, therefore, as it is granted that St. Paul doth mean nothing else by faith, but only a full persuasion that that which we do is well done; against which kind of faith or persuasion as St. Paul doth count it sin to enterprise anything, so likewise some of the very heathen have taught, as Tully, "That nothing ought to be done whereof thou doubtest whether it be right or wrong, whereby it appeareth that even those which had no knowledge of the word of God did see much of the equity of this which the Apostle requireth of a Christian man." I hope we shall not seem altogether unnecessarily to doubt of the soundness of their opinion, who think simply that nothing but only the word of God can give us assurance in anything we are to do, and resolve us that we do well. For might not the Jews have been fully persuaded that they did well to think (if they had so thought) that in Christ God the Father was, although the only ground of this their faith had been the wonderful works they saw Him do? Might not, yea did not Thomas fully in the end persuade himself that he did well to think that body, which now was raised, to be the same which had been crucified? That which gave Thomas this assurance was his sense: "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou believest," said our Saviour. What Scripture had Tully for his assurance? Yet I nothing doubt but that they who allege him think he did well to set down in writing a thing so consonant unto truth. Finally,

we all believe that the Scriptures of God are sacred, and that they have proceeded from God, ourselves we assure that we do right well in so believing. We have for this point a demonstration sound and infallible. But it is not the word of God which doth or possibly can assure us that we do well to think it His word; for if any one book of Scripture did give testimony to all, yet still that Scripture which giveth credit to the rest would require another Scripture to give credit unto it. Neither could we ever come unto any pause whereon to rest our assurance this way, so that unless besides Scripture there were something which might assure us that we do well, we could not think we do well, no, not in being assured that Scripture is a sacred and holy rule of well doing. On which determination we might be contented to stay ourselves without further proceeding herein, but that we are drawn on into larger speech by reason of their so great earnestness who beat more and more upon these last alleged words, as being of all other most pregnant. Whereas, therefore, they still argue that "wheresoever faith is wanting there is sin," and "in every action not commanded faith is wanting; ergo, in every action not commanded there is sin," I would demand of them, first, forasmuch as the nature of things indifferent is neither to be commanded nor forbidden, but left free and arbitrary, how there can be anything indifferent if for want of faith sin be committed when anything not commanded is done. So that of necessity they must add somewhat, and at leastwise thus set it down: in every action not commanded of God or permitted with approbation faith is wanting, and for want of faith there is sin. The next thing we are to inquire is, what those things be which God permitteth with approbation, and how we may know them to be so permitted. When there are unto one end sundry means, as for example, for the sustenance of our bodies many kinds of food, many sorts of raiment to clothe our nakedness, and so in other things of like condition; here, the end itself being necessary, but not so any one mean thereunto—necessary that our bodies should be both fed and clothed, howbeit no one kind of food or raiment necessary; therefore we hold these things free in their own nature and indifferent. The choice is left to our own discretion, except a principal bond of some higher duty remove the *indifferency* that such things have in themselves. Their

indifferency is removed if either we take away our own liberty, as Ananias did, for whom to have sold or held his possessions it was indifferent till his solemn vow and promise unto God had strictly bound him one only way; or if God himself have precisely abridged the same by restraining us unto, or by barring us from, some one or more things of many which otherwise were in themselves altogether indifferent. Many fashions of priestly attire there were whereof Aaron and his sons might have had their free choice without sin, but that God expressly tied them unto one. All meats indifferent unto the Jew, were it not that God by name excepted some, as swine's flesh. Impossible, therefore, it is we should otherwise think than that what things God doth neither command nor forbid, the same He permitteth with approbation either to be done or left undone. "All things are lawful unto me," saith the Apostle, speaking, as it seemeth, in the person of the Christian Gentile for maintenance of liberty in things indifferent; whereunto his answer is that nevertheless "all things are not expedient": in things indifferent there is a choice, they are not always equally expedient. Now in things although not commanded of God, yet lawful because they are permitted, the question is, what light shall show us the conveniency which one hath above another? For answer, their final determination is, that whereas the heathen did send men for the difference of good and evil to the light of reason, in such things the Apostle sendeth us to the school of Christ in His word, which only is able through faith to give us assurance and resolution in our doings; which word "only" is utterly without possibility of ever being proved. For what if it were true concerning things indifferent, that unless the word of the Lord had determined of the free use of them, there could have been no lawful use of them at all, which notwithstanding is untrue, because it is not the Scriptures setting down such things as indifferent but their not setting down as necessary that doth make them to be indifferent; yet this to our present purpose serveth nothing at all. We inquire not now whether anything be free to be used which Scripture hath not set down as free, but concerning things known and acknowledged to be indifferent, whether, particularly in choosing any one of *them before another*, we sin, if anything but Scripture direct *us in this our choice*. When many meats are set before

me, all are indifferent, none unlawful. I take one as most convenient. If Scripture require me so to do, then is not the thing indifferent, because I must do what Scripture requireth. They are all indifferent; I might take any. Scripture doth not require of me to make any special choice of one. I do notwithstanding make choice of one, my discretion teaching me so to do. A hard case, that hereupon I should be justly condemned of sin. Nor let any man think that following the judgment of natural discretion in such cases, we can have no assurance that we please God; for to the Author and God of our nature how shall any operation proceeding in natural sort be in that respect unacceptable? The nature which Himself hath given to work by He cannot but be delighted with, when we exercise the same any way without commandment of His to the contrary. My desire is to make this cause so manifest that, if it were possible, no doubt or scruple concerning the same might remain in any man's cogitation. Some truths there are the verity whereof time doth alter; as it is now true that Christ is risen from the dead, which thing was not true at such time as Christ was living on earth and had not suffered. It would be known, therefore, whether this which they teach concerning the sinful stain of all actions not commanded of God be a truth that doth now appertain unto us only, or a perpetual truth, in such sort that from the first beginning of the world unto the last consummation thereof it neither hath been nor can be otherwise. I see not how they can restrain this unto any particular time, how they can think it true now and not always true, that in every action not commanded there is, for want of faith, sin. Then let them cast back their eyes unto former generations of men, and mark what was done in the prime of the world. Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Job, and the rest that lived before any syllable of the law of God was written, did they not sin as much as we do in every action not commanded? That which God is unto us by His sacred word, the same He was unto them by such like means as Eliphaz in Job describeth. If, therefore, we sin in every action which the Scripture commandeth us not, it followeth that they did the like in all such actions as were not by revelation from heaven exacted at their hands. Unless God from heaven *did by vision still show them what to do, they might do*

nothing, not eat, not drink, not sleep, not move. Yea, but even as in darkness candlelight may serve to guide men's steps, which to use in the day were madness ; so when God had once delivered His law in writing, it may be they are of opinion, that then it must needs be sin for men to do anything which was not there commanded them to do, whatsoever they might do before. Let this be granted, and it shall hereupon plainly ensue, either that the light of Scripture once shining in the world, all other light of Nature is therewith in such sort drowned, that now we need it not, neither may we longer use it ; or, if it stand us in any stead, yet as Aristotle speaketh of men whom Nature hath framed for the state of servitude, saying, "They have reason so far forth as to conceive when others direct them," but little or none in directing themselves by themselves ; so likewise our natural capacity and judgment must serve us only for the right understanding of that which the sacred Scripture teacheth. Had the prophets who succeeded Moses, or the blessed apostles which followed them, been settled in this persuasion, never would they have taken so great pains in gathering together natural arguments, thereby to teach the faithful their duties. To use unto them any other motive than *Scriptum est*, "Thus it is written," had been to teach them other grounds of their actions than Scripture, which I grant they allege commonly but not only. Only Scripture they should have alleged, had they been thus persuaded, that so far forth we do sin, as we do anything otherwise directed than by Scripture. St. Augustine was resolute in points of Christianity to credit none, how godly and learned soever he were, unless he confirmed his sentence by the Scriptures, or by some reason not contrary to them. Let them therefore, with St. Augustine, reject and condemn that which is not grounded either on the Scripture, or on some reason not contrary to Scripture, and we are ready to give them our hands in token of friendly consent with them.

5. But against this it may be objected, and is, that the Fathers do nothing more usually in their books than draw arguments from the Scripture negatively in reproof of that which is evil ; "Scriptures teach it not, avoid it therefore ;" these disputes with the Fathers are ordinary, neither is it *hard to show* that the prophets themselves have so reasoned. *Which arguments* being sound and good, it should seem

that it cannot be unsound or evil to hold still the same assertion, against which hitherto we have disputed. For if it stand with reason thus to argue: Such a thing is not taught us in Scripture, therefore we may not receive or allow it: how should it seem unreasonable to think, that whatsoever we may lawfully do, the Scripture by commanding it must make it lawful? But how far such arguments do reach, it shall the better appear by considering the matter wherein they have been urged. First, therefore, this we constantly deny, that of so many testimonies as they are able to produce for the strength of negative arguments, any one doth generally (which is the point in question) condemn either all opinions as false, or all actions as unlawful, which the Scripture teacheth us not. The most that can be collected out of them is only that in some cases a negative argument taken from Scripture is strong, whereof no man endued with judgment can doubt. But doth the strength of some negative argument prove this kind of negative argument strong, by force whereof all things are denied which Scripture affirmeth not, or all things which Scripture prescribeth not, condemned? The question between us is concerning matter of action, what things are lawful or unlawful for men to do. The sentences alleged out of the Fathers, are as peremptory and as large in every respect for matter of opinion, as of action: which argueth that in truth they never meant any otherwise to tie the one than the other unto Scripture, both being thereunto equally tied, as far as each is required in the same kind of necessity unto salvation. If therefore it be not unlawful to know, and with full persuasion to believe, much more than Scripture alone doth teach; if it be against all sense and reason to condemn the knowledge of so many arts and sciences as are otherwise learned than in Holy Scripture, notwithstanding the manifest speeches of ancient Catholic Fathers, which seem to close up within the bosom thereof all manner of good and lawful knowledge: wherefore should their words be thought more effectual, to show that we may not in deeds and practice, then they are to prove that in speculation and knowledge, we ought not to go any farther than the Scripture? Which Scripture being given to teach matters of belief no less than of action, the Fathers must needs be, and are even as plain against credit, besides the relation, as against practice, without the injunction of the Scripture. Saint

Augustine hath said, "Whether it be question of Christ, or whether it be question of His Church, or of what thing soever the question be; I say not if we, but if an angel from heaven shall tell us anything beside that you have received in the Scripture under the Law and the Gospel, let him be accursed." In like sort, Tertullian, "We may not give ourselves this liberty to bring in anything of our will, nor choose anything that other men bring in of their will; we have the apostles themselves for authors, which themselves brought nothing of their own will, but the discipline which they received of Christ they delivered faithfully unto the people." In which place, the name of discipline importeth not as they who allege it would fain have it construed; but as any man who noteth the circumstance of the place, and the occasion of uttering the words, will easily acknowledge; even the selfsame thing it signifieth which the name of doctrine doth, and as well might the one as the other there have been used. To help them farther, doth not St. Jerome, after the selfsame manner, dispute, "We believe it not because we read it not?" Yea, "We ought not so much as to know the things which the Book of the Law containeth not," saith St. Hilary. Shall we hereupon then conclude that we may not take knowledge of, or give credit unto, anything which sense, or experience, or report, or art doth propose, unless we find the same in Scripture? No, it is too plain, that so far to extend their speeches is to wrest them against their true intent and meaning. To urge anything upon the Church, requiring thereunto that religious assent of Christian belief, where-with the words of the holy prophets are received, to urge anything as part of that supernatural and celestially revealed truth which God hath taught, and not to show it in Scripture, this did the ancient Fathers evermore think unlawful, impious, execrable. And thus as their speeches were meant, so by us they must be restrained. As for those alleged words of Cyprian, "The Christian religion shall find that out of this Scripture rules of all doctrines have sprung, and that from hence doth spring and hither doth return whatsoever the ecclesiastical discipline doth contain." Surely this place would never have been brought forth in this cause if it had been but once read over in the author himself out of whom it is cited; for the words are uttered concerning that one principal commandment of love, in the honour

whereof he speaketh after this sort : " Surely this commandment containeth the law and the prophets, and in this one word is the abridgment of all the volumes of Scripture. This Nature, and reason, and the authority of Thy word, O Lord, doth proclaim ; this we have heard out of Thy mouth ; herein the perfection of all religion doth consist. This is the first commandment and the last ; this, being written in the Book of Life, is (as it were) an everlasting lesson both to men and angels. Let Christian religion read this one word and meditate upon this commandment, and out of this Scripture it shall find the rules of all learning to have sprung, and from hence to have risen, and hither to return whatsoever the ecclesiastical discipline containeth ; and that in all things it is vain and bootless which charity confirmeth not." Was this a sentence (trow you) of so great force to prove that Scripture is the only rule of all the actions of men ? Might they not hereby even as well prove that one commandment of Scripture is the only rule of all things, and so exclude the rest of the Scripture, as now they do all means besides Scripture ? But thus it fareth when too much desire of contradiction causeth our speech rather to pass by number than to stay for weight. Well, but Tertullian doth in this case speak yet more plainly. " The Scripture," saith he, " denieth what it noteth not," which are indeed the words of Tertullian. But what ? The Scripture reckoneth up the kings of Israel, and amongst those kings, David ; the Scripture reckoneth up the sons of David, and amongst those sons, Solomon. To prove that amongst the kings of Israel there was no David but only one, no Solomon but one in the sons of David, Tertullian's argument will fitly prove ; for inasmuch as the Scripture did propose to reckon up all, if there were more it would have named them. In this case the Scripture doth deny the thing it noteth not. Howbeit I could not but think that man to do me some piece of manifest injury which would hereby fasten upon me a general opinion, as if I did think the Scripture to deny the very reign of King Henry the Eighth, because it nowhere noteth that any such king did reign. Tertullian's speech is probable concerning such matter as he there speaketh of. " There was," saith Tertullian, " no second Lamech like to him that had two wives. The Scripture denieth what it noteth not." As, therefore, it noteth one

such to have been in that age of the world, so, had there been more, it would by likelihood as well have noted many as one. What infer we now hereupon? "There was no second Lamech; the Scripture denieth what it noteth not." Were it consonant unto reason to divorce these two sentences, the former of which doth show how the latter is restrained, and not marking the former, to conclude by the latter of them that simply whatsoever any man at this day doth think true is by the Scripture denied unless it be there affirmed to be true? I wonder that a case so weak and feeble hath been so much persisted in. But to come unto those their sentences wherein matters of action are more apparently touched, the name of Tertullian is as before so here again pretended, who, writing unto his wife two books, and exhorting her in the one to live a widow in case God before her should take him unto His mercy, and in the other, if she did marry, yet not to join herself to an infidel, as in those times some widows Christian had done for the advancement of their estate in this present world, he urgeth very earnestly St. Paul's words, "only in the Lord;" whereupon he demandeth of them that think they may do the contrary, what Scripture they can show where God hath dispensed and granted licence to do against that which the blessed Apostle so strictly doth enjoin. And because, in defence, it might perhaps be replied, seeing God doth will that couples which are married when both are infidels, if either party chance to be after converted unto Christianity, this should not make separation between them as long as the unconverted was willing to retain the other on whom the grace of Christ had shined; wherefore, then, should that let the making of marriage which doth not dissolve marriage being made? After great reasons showed why God doth, in converts being married, allow continuance with infidels, and yet disallow that the faithful, when they are free, should enter into bonds of wedlock with such, concludeth in the end, concerning those women that so marry, "They that please not the Lord do even thereby offend the Lord, they do even thereby throw themselves into evil." That is to say, while they please Him not by marrying in Him, they do that whereby they incur His displeasure; they make an offer of themselves into the service of that *enemy with whose servants they link themselves in so near a bond.* What one syllable is there in all this prejudicial

any way to that which we hold? For the words of Tertullian, as they are by them alleged, are two ways misunderstood; both in the former part, where that is extended generally to "all things" in the neuter gender which he speaketh in the feminine gender of women's persons, and in the latter, where "received with hurt" is put instead of "wilful incurring that which is evil." And so in sum, Tertullian doth neither mean nor say, as is pretended, "Whatsoever pleaseth not the Lord displeaseth Him, and with hurt is received," but "Those women that please not the Lord" by their kind of marrying "do even thereby offend the Lord, they do even thereby throw themselves into evil." Somewhat more show there is, in a second place of Tertullian, which notwithstanding, when we have examined it, will be found as the rest are. The Roman Emperor's custom was, at certain solemn times, to bestow on his soldiers a donative, which donative they received, wearing garlands upon their heads. There were, in the time of the Emperors Severus and Antoninus, many who, being soldiers, had been converted unto Christ, and notwithstanding continued still in that military course of life; in which number one man there was amongst all the rest who at such a time coming to the tribune of the army to receive his donative, came but with a garland in his hand, and not in such sort as others did. The tribune, offended hereat, demandeth what this great singularity should mean. To whom the soldier, "*Christianus sum*, I am a Christian." Many there were so besides him, which yet did otherwise at that time; whereupon grew a question, whether a Christian soldier might herein do as the unchristian did, and wear as they wore. Many of them which were very sound in Christian belief, did rather commend the zeal of this man, than approve his action. Tertullian was at the same time a Montanist, and an enemy unto the Church for condemning that prophetic spirit, which Montanus and his followers did boast they had received; as if in them Christ had performed His last promise; as if to them He had sent the Spirit that should be their perfecter and final instructor in the mysteries of Christian truth. Which exulceration of mind made him apt to take all occasions of contradiction. Wherefore, in honour of that action, and to gall *their minds* who did not so much commend it, he wrote his

book "*De corona militis*," not dissembling the stomach wherewith he wrote it. For first the man he commendeth as one more constant than the rest of his brethren, "who presumed," saith he, "that they might well enough serve two Lords." Afterwards choler somewhat rising within him, he addeth, "It doth even remain that they should also devise how to rid themselves of His martyrdoms, towards the prophecies of whose holy spirit they have already showed their disdain. They mutter that their good and long peace is now in hazard. I doubt not but some of them send the Scriptures before, truss up bag and baggage, make themselves in a readiness, that they may fly from city to city. For that is the only point of the Gospel which they are careful not to forget. I know even their pastors very well what men they are, in peace lions, harts in time of trouble and fear." Now these men, saith Tertullian, "They must be answered where we do find it written in Scripture that a Christian man may not wear a garland." And as men's speeches uttered in heat of distempered affection, have oftentimes much more eagerness than weight; so he that shall mark the proofs alleged, and the answers to things objected in that book, will now and then perhaps espy the like imbecility. Such is that argument whereby they that wore on their heads garlands, are charged as transgressors of Nature's law, and guilty of sacrilege against God the Lord of Nature, inasmuch as flowers in such sort worn, can neither be smelt nor seen well by those that wear them: and God made flowers sweet and beautiful, that being seen and smelt unto, they might so delight. Neither doth Tertullian bewray this weakness in striking only, but also in repelling their strokes with whom he contendeth. They ask, saith he, "What Scripture is there which doth teach that we should not be crowned? And what Scripture is there which doth teach that we should? For in requiring on the contrary part the aid of Scripture, they do give sentence beforehand that their part ought also by Scripture to be aided." Which answer is of no great force. There is no necessity, that if I confess I ought not to do that which the Scripture forbiddeth me, I should thereby acknowledge myself bound to do nothing which the Scripture commandeth me not. For many inducements *besides Scripture* may lead me to that, which if Scripture *be against*, they all give place, and are of no value; yet

otherwise are strong and effectual to persuade. Which thing himself well enough understanding, and being not ignorant that Scripture in many things doth neither command nor forbid, but use silence ; his resolution in fine is : that in the Church a number of things are strictly observed, whereof no law of Scripture maketh mention one way or other ; that of things once received and confirmed by use, long usage is a law sufficient ; that in civil affairs, when there is no other law, custom itself doth stand for law ; that inasmuch as law doth stand upon reason, to allege reason serveth as well as to cite Scripture ; that whatsoever is reasonable, the same is lawful whosoever is author of it ; that the authority of custom is great ; finally, that the custom of Christians was then and had been a long time not to wear garlands, and, therefore, that undoubtedly they did offend, who presumed to violate such a custom by not observing that thing : the very inveterate observation whereof was a law sufficient to bind all men to observe it, unless they could show some higher law, some law of Scripture to the contrary. This presupposed, it may stand then very well with strength and fondness of reason, even thus to answer ; “whereas they ask what Scripture forbiddeth them to wear a garland, we are in this case rather to demand what Scripture commandeth them. They cannot here allege that it is permitted which is not forbidden them : no, that is forbidden them which is not permitted.” For long received custom forbidding them to do as they did (if so be it did forbid them) there was no excuse in the world to justify their act, unless in the Scripture they could show some law that did license them thus to break a received custom. Now whereas in all the books of Tertullian besides, there is not so much found as in that one, to prove not only that we may do, but that we ought to do sundry things which the Scripture commandeth not ; out of that very book these sentences are brought to make us believe that Tertullian was of a clean, contrary mind. We cannot, therefore, hereupon yield, we cannot grant, that hereby is made manifest the argument of Scripture negative to be of force, not only in doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline, but even in matters arbitrary. For Tertullian doth plainly hold even in that book that neither the matter which he entreateth of was arbitrary but necessary, inasmuch as the received custom of

1

the Church did tie and bind them not to wear garlands as the heathens did ; yea, and further also, he reckoneth up particularly a number of things, whereof he expressly concludeth, "*Harum et aliarum ejus modi disciplinarum silegem expostules scripturarum, nullam invenies,*" which is as much as if he had said, in express words, "Many things there are which concern the discipline of the Church and the duties of men, which to abrogate and take away, the Scriptures negatively urged may not in any case persuade us, but they must be observed, yea although no Scripture be found which requireth any such thing." Tertullian, therefore, undoubtedly doth not in this book show himself to be of the same mind with them by whom his name is pretended.

6. But since the sacred Scriptures themselves afford oftentimes such arguments as are taken from divine authority both one way and other, "The Lord hath commanded, therefore, it must be." And again in like sort, "He hath not, therefore it must not be:" some certainty concerning this point seemeth requisite to be set down. God himself can neither possibly err, nor lead into error. For this cause His testimonies, whatsoever He affirmeth, are always truth and most infallible certainty. Yea further, because the things that proceed from him are perfect without any manner of defect or maim, it cannot be but that the words of His mouth are absolute, and lack nothing which they should have, for performance of that thing whereunto they tend. Whereupon it followeth, that the end being known whereunto he directeth his speech, the argument negatively is evermore strong and forcible, concerning those things that are apparently requisite unto the same end. As for example, God intending to set down sundry times that which in angels is most excellent, hath not anywhere spoken so highly of them as He hath of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; therefore they are not in dignity equal unto Him. It is the Apostle St. Paul's argument. The purpose of God was to teach His people, both unto whom they should offer sacrifice, and what sacrifice was to be offered. To burn their sons in fire unto Baal He did not command them. He spake no such thing, neither came it into His mind: therefore this they ought not to have *done*. Which argument the prophet Jeremiah useth more *than once, as being so effectual and strong, that although*

the thing he reproveth were not only commanded but forbidden them, and that expressly : yet the prophet chooseth rather to charge them with the fault of making a law unto themselves, than the crime of transgressing a law which God had made. For when the Lord had once Himself precisely set down a form of executing that wherein we are to serve Him, the fault appeareth greater to do that which we are not, than not to do that which we are commanded. In this we seem to charge the law of God with hardness only, in that with foolishness ; in this we show ourselves weak and unapt to be doers of His will, in that we take upon us to be controllers of His wisdom : in this we fail to perform the thing which God seeth meet, convenient and good, in that we presume to see what is meet and convenient better than God himself. In those actions therefore the whole form whereof God hath of purpose set down to be observed, we may not otherwise do than exactly as He hath prescribed : in such things negative arguments are strong. Again, with a negative argument David is pressed concerning the purpose he had to build a temple unto the Lord : " Thus saith the Lord, thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in. Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I one word to any of the Judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, why have ye not built me an house ? " The Jews urged with a negative argument touching the aid which they sought at the hands of the King of Egypt, " Woe to those rebellious children (saith the Lord) which walk forth to go down into Egypt, and have not asked counsel at my mouth, to strengthen themselves with the strength of Pharaoh." Finally, the league of Joshua with the Gibeonites is likewise with a negative argument touched. It was not as it should be : And why ? The Lord gave them not that advice ; " They sought not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." By the virtue of which examples, if any man should suppose the force of negative arguments approved, when they are taken from Scripture in such sort as we in this question are pressed therewith, they greatly deceive themselves. For unto which of all these was it said, that they had done amiss in purposing to do, or in doing anything at all which the Scripture commanded them not ? Our question is, whether all be sin which is done without direction by Scripture, and not whether the Israelites did at any time amiss by following their own minds, without asking counsel of

God. No, it was that people's singular privilege, a favour which God vouchsafed them above the rest of the world, that in the affairs of their estate, which were not determinable one way or other by the Scripture, Himself gave them extraordinarily direction and counsel, as oft as they sought it at His hands. Thus God did first by speech unto Moses; after by Urim and Thummim unto priests; lastly, by dreams and visions unto prophets, from whom in such cases they were to receive the answer of God. Concerning Joshua therefore thus spake the Lord unto Moses, saying, "He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him by the judgment of Urim before the Lord;" whereof had Joshua been mindful, the fraud of the Gibeonites could not so smoothly have passed unespied till there was no help. The Jews had prophets to have resolved them from the mouth of God himself, whether Egyptian aids should profit them yea or no: but they thought themselves wise enough, and Him unworthy to be of their counsel. In this respect therefore was their reproof, though sharp, yet just, albeit there had been no charge precisely given them that they should always take heed of Egypt. But as for David, to think that he did evil in determining to build God a temple, because there was in Scripture no commandment that he should build it, were very injurious: the purpose of his heart was religious and godly, the act most worthy of honour and renown; neither could Nathan choose but admire his virtuous intent, exhort him to go forward, and beseech God to prosper him therein. But God saw the endless troubles which David should be subject unto during the whole time of his regiment, and therefore gave charge to defer so good a work till the days of tranquillity and peace, wherein it might without interruption be performed. David supposed that it could not stand with the duty which he owed unto God, to set himself in an house of cedar trees, and to behold the ark of the Lord's Covenant unsettled. This opinion the Lord abateth, by causing Nathan to show him plainly, that it should be no more imputed unto him for a fault, than it had been unto the Judges of Israel before him, his case being the same which theirs was, their times not more inquiet than his, nor more unfit for such an action. Wherefore concerning the force of negative arguments so *taken from the authority of Scripture as by us they are denied there is in all this less than nothing.* And touching that

which unto this purpose is borrowed from the controversies sometime handled between Mr. Harding, and the worthiest divine that Christendom hath bred for the space of some hundreds of years, who being brought up together in one university, it fell out in them which was spoken of two others: "They learned in the same that which in contrary camps they did practise." Of these two, the one objecting that with us arguments taken from authority negatively are over common, the Bishop's answer hereunto is that "this kind of argument is thought to be good whensoever proof is taken of God's word, and is used, not only by us, but also by St. Paul and by many of the Catholic Fathers. St. Paul saith, God said not unto Abraham, 'In thy seeds all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,' but 'in thy seed which is Christ,' and thereof he thought he made a good argument. Likewise saith Origen, 'The bread which the Lord gave unto His disciples, saying unto them, Take and eat, he differed not, nor commanded to be reserved till the next day.' Such arguments Origen and other learned Fathers thought to stand for good, whatsoever misliking Master Harding hath found in them. This kind of proof is thought to hold in God's commandments, for that they be full and perfect, and God hath specially charged us that we should neither put to them nor take from them, and therefore it seemeth good unto them that have learned of Christ, *Unus est Magister vester Christus*, and have heard the voice of God the Father from heaven, *Ipsium audite*. But unto them that add to the word of God what them listeth, and make God's will subject unto their will, and break God's commandments for their own tradition's sake, unto them it seemeth not good." Again, the English Apology, alleging the example of the Greeks, how they have neither private masses, nor mangled sacraments, nor purgatories, nor pardons, it pleaseth Master Harding to jest out the matter, to use the help of his wits where strength of truth failed him, and to answer with scoffing at negatives. The Bishop's defence in this case is: "The ancient learned Fathers having to deal with politic heretics that in defence of their errors avouched the judgment of all the old bishops and doctors that had been before them, and the general consent of the primitive and whole universal Church, and that with as good regard of truth and as faithfully as *you do now*, the better to discover the shameless boldness

and nakedness of their doctrine, were oftentimes likewise forced to use the negative, and so to drive the same heretics, as we do you, to prove their affirmatives, which thing to do it was never possible. The ancient Father Irenæus thus stayed himself, as we do, by the negative, *Hoc neque Prophete prædicaverunt, neque Dominus docuit, neque Apostoli tradiderunt*: 'This thing neither did the prophets publish, nor our Lord teach, nor the apostles deliver.' By a like negative, Chrysostom saith, 'This tree neither Paul planted, nor Apollo watered, nor God increased.' In the like sort, Leo saith, 'What needeth it to believe that thing that neither the law hath taught, nor the prophets have spoken, nor the gospel hath preached, nor the apostles have delivered?' And again, how are the new devices brought in that our fathers never knew? St. Augustine, having reckoned up a great number of the Bishops of Rome, by a general negative saith thus: 'In all this order of succession of bishops, there is not one bishop found that was a Donatist.' St. Gregory, being himself a Bishop of Rome, and writing against the title of Universal Bishop, saith thus: 'None of all my predecessors ever consented to use this ungodly title; no Bishop of Rome ever took upon him this name of singularity.' By such negatives, Master Harding, we reprove the vanity and novelty of your religion; we tell you none of the Catholic ancient learned Fathers, either Greek or Latin, ever used either your private mass, or your half communion, or your barbarous unknown prayers. Paul never planted them, Apollo never watered them, God never increased them; they are of yourselves, they are not of God." In all this there is not a syllable which any way crosseth us; for concerning arguments negative taken from human authority, they are here proved to be in some cases very strong and forcible. They are not, in our estimation, idle reproofs, when the authors of needless innovations are opposed with such negatives as that of Leo? How are these new devices brought in which our fathers never knew? When their grave and reverend superiors do reckon up unto them, as Augustine did unto the Donatists, large catalogues of Fathers wondered at for their wisdom, piety, and learning, amongst whom, for so many ages before us, no one did ever so think of the *Church's affairs*, as now the world doth begin to be persuaded, surely by us they are not taught to take exception

herèat because such arguments are negative ; much less when the like are taken from the sacred authority of Scripture, if the matter itself do bear them. For in truth the question is not whether an argument from Scripture negatively may be good, but whether it be so generally good that in all actions men may urge it. The Fathers, I grant, do use very general and large terms, even as Hiero the King did in speaking of Archimedes : " From henceforward whatsoever Archimedes speaketh, it must be believed." His meaning was not that Archimedes could simply in nothing be deceived, but that he had in such sort approved his skill that he seemed worthy of credit for ever after in matters appertaining unto the science he was skilful in. In speaking thus largely, it is presumed that men's speeches will be taken according to the matter whereof they speak. Let any man, therefore, that carrieth indifferency of judgment peruse the Bishop's speeches, and consider well of those negatives concerning Scripture which he produceth out of Irenæus, Chrysostom, and Leo, which three are chosen from amongst the residue because the sentences of the others (even as one of theirs also) do make for defence of negative arguments taken from human authority, and not from Divine only. They mention no more restraint in the one than in the other, yet I think themselves will not hereby judge that the Fathers took both to be strong without restraint unto any special kind of matter wherein they held such argument forcible. Nor doth the Bishop either say or prove any more than that an argument in some kinds of matter may be good, although taken negatively from Scripture.

7. An earnest desire to draw all things unto the determination of bare and naked Scripture hath caused here much pains to be taken in abating the estimation and credit of man, which, if we labour to maintain as far as truth and reason will bear, let not any think that we travel about a matter not greatly needful ; for the scope of all their pleading against man's authority is, to overthrow such orders, laws, and constitutions in the Church as depending thereupon if they should therefore be taken away, would peradventure leave neither face nor memory of Church to continue long in the world, the world especially being such as now it is. That which they have in this case spoken, *I would for brevity's sake let pass, but that the drift of their*

speech being so dangerous, their words are not to be neglected. Wherefore to say that simply an argument taken from man's authority doth hold no way, neither affirmatively nor negatively, is hard. By a man's authority we here understand, the force which his word hath for the assurance of another's mind that buildeth upon it; as the Apostle somewhat did upon their report of the house of Cloe, and the Samaritans in a matter of far greater moment upon the report of a simple woman. For so it is said in St. John's Gospel, "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He hath told me all things that ever I did." The strength of man's authority is affirmatively such, that the weightiest affairs in the world depend thereon. In judgment and justice are not hereupon proceedings grounded? Saith not the law that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be confirmed?" This the law of God would not say, if there were in a man's testimony no force at all to prove anything. And if it be admitted that in matter of fact there is some credit to be given to the testimony of man, but not in matter of opinion and judgment; we see the contrary both acknowledged, and universally practised also throughout the world. The sentences of wise and expert men were never but highly esteemed. Let the title of a man's right be called in question; are we not bold to rely and build upon the judgment of such as are famous for their skill in the laws of this land? In matter of state, the weight many times of some one man's authority is thought reason sufficient, even to sway over whole nations. And this not only with the simpler sort; but the learned and wiser we are, the more such arguments in some cases prevail with us. The reason why the simpler sort are moved with authority, is the conscience of their own ignorance; whereby it cometh to pass, that having learned men in admiration, they rather fear to dislike them, than know wherefore they should allow and follow their judgments. Contrariwise with them that are skilful, authority is much more strong and forcible; because they only are able to discern how just cause there is, why to some men's authority so much should be attributed. For which cause the name of Hippocrates (no doubt) were more effectual to persuade even such men as *Galen himself*, than to move a silly empiric. So that the *very selfsame* argument in this kind, which doth but induce the

vulgar sort to like, may constrain the wiser to yield And therefore not orators only with the people, but even the very profoundest disputers in all faculties, have hereby often with the best learned prevailed most. As for arguments taken from human authority, and that negatively ; for example sake, if we should think the assembling of the people of God together by the sound of a bell, the presenting of infants at the holy font by such as commonly we call their godfathers, or any other the like received custom to be impious, because some men of whom we think very reverently, have in their books and writings nowhere mentioned or taught that such things should be in the Church ; this reasoning were subject unto just reproof, it were but feeble, weak, and unsound. Notwithstanding even negatively an argument from human authority may be strong, as namely thus : The Chronicles of England mention no more than only six kings bearing the name of Edward, since the time of the last conquest ; therefore it cannot be there should be more. So that if the question be of the authority of a man's testimony, we cannot simply avouch, either that affirmatively it doth not anyway hold, or that it hath only force to induce the simpler sort, and not to constrain men of understanding and ripe judgment to yield assent, or that negatively it hath in it no strength at all. For unto every of these the contrary is most plain. Neither doth that which is alleged concerning the infirmity of men, overthrow or disprove this. Men are blinded with ignorance and error ; many things may escape them, and in many things they may be deceived ; yea, those things which they do know, they may either forget, or upon sundry indirect considerations let pass ; and although themselves do not err, yet may they through malice or vanity, even of purpose deceive others. Howbeit infinite cases there are wherein all these impediments and lets are so manifestly excluded, that there is no show or colour whereby any such exception may be taken, but that the testimony of man will stand as a ground of infallible assurance. That there is a City of Rome, that Pius Quintus and Gregory the Thirteenth, and others have been Popes of Rome, I suppose we are certainly enough persuaded. The ground of our persuasion, who never saw the place nor persons before named, can be nothing but man's testimony. Will any man here notwithstanding allege those mentioned human infirmities as reasons why these things should be mistrusted or doubted of ? Yea, that which is more, utterly to infringe

the force and strength of man's testimony, were to shake the very fortress of God's truth. For whatsoever we believe concerning salvation by Christ, although the Scripture be therein the ground of our belief; yet the authority of man is, if we mark it, the key which openeth the door of entrance into the knowledge of the Scripture. The Scripture doth not teach us the things that are of God, unless we did credit men who have taught us that the words of Scripture do signify those things. Some way therefore, notwithstanding man's infirmity, yet his authority may enforce assent. Upon better advice and deliberation so much is perceived, and at the length confessed, that arguments taken from the authority of men, may not only so far forth as hath been declared, but further also be of some force in human sciences; which force be it never so small, doth show that they are not utterly naught. But in matters divine it is still maintained stiffly, that they have no manner of force at all. Howbeit the very selfsame reason, which causeth to yield that they are of some force in the one, will at the length constrain also to acknowledge, that they are not in the other altogether unforcible. For if the natural strength of man's wit may by experience and study attain unto such ripeness in the knowledge of things human, that men in this respect may presume to build somewhat upon their judgment; what reason have we to think but that even in matters divine, the like wits furnished with necessary helps, exercised in Scripture with like diligence, and assisted with the grace of Almighty God, may grow unto so much perfection of knowledge, that men shall have just cause when anything pertinent unto faith and religion is doubted of, the more willingly to incline their minds towards that which the sentence of so grave, wise, and learned in that faculty shall judge most sound. For the controversy is of the weight of such men's judgments. Let it therefore be suspected, let it be taken as gross, corrupt, repugnant unto the truth; whatsoever concerning things divine above Nature shall at any time be spoken as out of the mouths of mere natural men, which have not the eyes wherewith heavenly things are discerned. For this we contend not. But whom God hath endued with principal gifts to aspire unto knowledge by, whose exercises, labours, and divine studies He hath so blest, that the world for their great and rare skill that way, hath them in singular admiration; *may we reject even their judgment likewise, as being utterly*

of no moment? For mine own part I dare not so lightly esteem of the Church, and of the principal pillars therein. The truth is, that the mind of man desireth evermore to know the truth according to the most infallible certainty which the nature of things can yield. The greatest assurance generally with all men, is that which we have by plain aspect and intuitive beholding. Where we cannot attain unto this; there what appeareth to be true by strong and invincible demonstration, such as wherein it is not by any way possible to be deceived, thereunto the mind doth necessarily assent, neither is it in the choice thereof to do otherwise. And in case these both do fail, then which way greatest probability leadeth, thither the mind doth evermore incline. Scripture with Christian men being received as the word of God, that for which we have probable, yea that which we have necessary reason for, yea that which we see with our eyes, is not thought so sure as that which the Scripture of God teacheth; because we hold that His speech revealeth there what Himself seeth, and therefore the strongest proof of all, and the most necessarily assented unto by us (which do thus receive the Scripture), is the Scripture. Now it is not required nor can be exacted at our hands, that we should yield unto any thing other assent than such as doth answer the evidence which is to be had of that we assent unto. For which cause, even in matters divine, concerning some things we may lawfully doubt and suspend our judgment, inclining neither to one side or other, as namely touching the time of the fall both of man and angels; of some things we may very well retain an opinion that they are probable and not unlikely to be true, as when we hold that men have their souls rather by creation than propagation, or that the mother of our Lord lived always in the state of virginity as well after His birth as before (for of these two, the one her virginity before, is a thing which of necessity we must believe; the other, her continuance in the same state always, hath more likelihood of truth than the contrary), finally, in all things then are our consciences best resolved, and in most agreeable sort unto God and Nature settled, when they are so far persuaded as those grounds of persuasion which are to be had will bear. Which thing I do so much the rather set down, for that I see how a number of souls are, for want of right information in this point, oftentimes grievously vexed. When bare and unbuilted con-

clusions are put into their minds, they finding not themselves to have thereof any great certainty, imagine that this proceedeth only from lack of faith, and that the Spirit of God doth not work in them, as it doth in true believers; by this means their hearts are much troubled, they fall into anguish and perplexity; whereas the truth is, that how bold and confident soever we may be in words, when it cometh to the point of trial, such as the evidence is which the truth hath either in itself or through proof, such is the hearts assent thereunto, neither can it be stronger, being grounded as it should be. I grant that proof derived from the authority of man's judgment, is not able to work that assurance which doth grow by a stronger proof; and therefore although ten thousand general councils would set down one and the same definitive sentence concerning any point of religion whatsoever, yet one demonstrative reason alleged, or one manifest testimony cited from the mouth of God himself to the contrary, could not choose but overweigh them all; inasmuch as for them to have been deceived, it is not impossible; it is, that demonstrative reason or testimony divine should deceive. Howbeit, in defect of proof infallible, because the mind doth rather follow probable persuasions than approve the things that have in them no likelihood of truth at all; surely if a question concerning matter of doctrine were proposed, and on the one side no kind of proof appearing, there should on the other be alleged and showed that so a number of the learnedest divines in the world have ever thought; although it did not appear what reason or what Scripture led them to be of that judgment, yet to their very bare judgment somewhat a reasonable man would attribute, notwithstanding the common imbecilities which are incident into our nature. And whereas it is thought that, especially with the Church, and those that are called and persuaded of the authority of the word of God, man's authority with them especially should not prevail; it must and doth prevail even with them, yea with them especially as far as equity requireth, and farther we maintain it not. For men to be tied and led by authority, as it were with a kind of captivity of judgment, and though there be reason to the contrary not to listen unto it, but to follow like beasts the first in the herd, they know not nor care not whither *this were brutish*. Again, that authority of men should prevail with men either against or above reason, is no part of

our belief. Companies of learned men, be they never so great and reverend, are to yield unto reason; the weight whereof is no whit prejudiced by the simplicity of his person which doth allege it, but being found to be sound and good, the bare opinion of men to the contrary, must of necessity stoop and give place. Irene writing against Marcion, which held one God author of the Old Testament, and another of the New, to prove that the apostles preached the same God which was known before to the Jews, he copiously allegeth sundry of their sermons and speeches uttered concerning that matter, and recorded in Scripture. And lest any should be wearied with such store of allegations, in the end he concludeth, "While we labour for these demonstrations out of Scripture, and do summarily declare the things which many ways have been spoken, be contented quietly to bear, and do not think my speech tedious: *Quoniam ostensiones quæ sunt in Scripturis non possunt ostendi nisi ex ipsis Scripturis*." Because demonstrations that are in Scripture, may not otherwise be showed, than by citing them out of the Scriptures themselves where they are." Which words make so little unto the purpose, that they seem as it were offended at him which hath called them thus solemnly forth to say nothing. And concerning the verdict of Jerome, if no man be he never so well learned, have after the apostles any authority to publish new doctrine as from heaven, and to require the world's assent as unto truth received by prophetic revelation; doth this prejudice the credit of learned men's judgments in opening that truth, which, by being conversant in the apostles' writings, they have themselves from thence learned? Saint Augustine exhorteth not to hear men, but to hearken what God speaketh. His purpose is not (I think) that we should stop our ears against his own exhortation, and therefore he cannot mean simply that audience should altogether be denied unto men; but either that if men speak one thing and God himself teach another, then He, not they to be obeyed; or if they both speak the same thing, yet then also man's speech unworthy of hearing, not simply, but in comparison of that which proceedeth from the mouth of God. Yea, but we doubt what the will of God is. Are we in this case forbidden to hear what men of judgment think it to be? If not, then this allegation also might very well have been spared. In that ancient strife

which was between the Catholic Fathers and Arrians, Donatists, and others of like perverse and froward disposition, as long as to Fathers or councils alleged on the one side, the like by the contrary side were opposed, impossible it was that ever the question should by this means grow unto any issue or end. The Scripture they both believed, the Scripture they knew could not give sentence on both sides, by Scripture the controversy between them was such as might be determined. In this case what madness was it with such kinds of proofs to nourish their contention, when there were such effectual means to end all controversy that was between them? Hereby therefore it doth not as yet appear, that an argument of authority of man affirmatively is in matters divine nothing worth. Which opinion being once inserted into the minds of the vulgar sort, what it may grow unto God knoweth. Thus much we see, it hath already made thousands so headstrong even in gross and palpable errors, that a man whose capacity will scarce serve him to utter fine words in sensible manner, blusheth not in any doubt concerning matter of Scripture to think his own bare yea as good as the nay of all the wise, grave and learned judgments that are in the whole world. Which insolency must be repressed, or it will be the very bane of Christian religion. Our Lord's disciples marking what speech He uttered unto them, and at the same time calling to mind a common opinion held by the scribes, between which opinion and the words of their Master, it seemed unto them that there was some contradiction, which they could not themselves answer with full satisfaction of their own minds; the doubt they proposed to our Saviour saying, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" They knew that the scribes did err greatly, and that many ways even in matters of their own profession. They notwithstanding thought the judgment of the very scribes in matters divine to be of some value: some probability they thought there was that Elias should come, inasmuch as the scribes said it. Now no truth can contradict any truth; desirous therefore they were to be taught, how both might stand together; that which they knew could not be false, because Christ spake it; and this which to them did seem true, only because the scribes had said it. For the Scripture from whence the scribes did gather it, was not then in their heads. We do not find that *our Saviour* reproved them of error, for thinking the judg-

ment of scribes to be worth the objecting, for esteeming it to be of any moment or value in matters concerning God. We cannot therefore be persuaded that the will of God is, we should so far reject the authority of men, as to reckon it nothing. No, it may be a question, whether they that urge us unto this be themselves so persuaded indeed. Men do sometimes bewray that by deeds, which to confess they are hardly drawn. Mark then if this be not general with all men for the most part. When the judgments of learned men are alleged against them, what do they but either elevate their credit, or oppose unto them the judgments of others as learned? Which thing doth argue that all men acknowledge in them some force and weight, for which they are loath the cause they maintain should be so much weakened as their testimony is available. Again, what reason is there why alleging testimonies as proofs, men give them some title of credit, honour and estimation whom they allege, unless beforehand it be sufficiently known who they are; what reason hereof but only a common ingrafted persuasion, that in some men there may be found such qualities as are able to countervail those exceptions which might be taken against them, and that such men's authority is not lightly to be shaken off. Shall I add further, that the force of arguments drawn from the authority of Scripture itself, as Scriptures commonly are alleged, shall (being sifted) be found to depend upon the strength of this so much despised and debased authority of man? Surely it doth, and that oftener than we are aware of. For although Scripture be of God, and therefore the proof which is taken from thence must needs be of all other most invincible; yet this strength it hath not, unless it avouch the selfsame thing for which it is brought. If there be either undeniable appearance that so it doth, or reason such as cannot deceive, then Scripture-proof (no doubt) in strength and value exceedeth all. But for the most part, even such as are readiest to cite for one thing five hundred sentences of Holy Scripture; what warrant have they, that any one of them doth mean the thing for which it is alleged? Is not their surest ground most commonly, either some probable conjecture of their own, or the judgment of others taking those Scriptures as they do? Which notwithstanding to mean otherwise than they take them, it is not still altogether impossible. So that now *and then they ground themselves on human authority, even*

when they most pretend divine. Thus it fareth even clean throughout the whole controversy about that discipline which is so earnestly urged and laboured for. Scriptures are plentifully alleged to prove that the whole Christian world for ever ought to embrace it. Hereupon men term it "The discipline of God." Howbeit examine, sift, and resolve their alleged proofs, till you come to the very root from whence they spring, the heart wherein their strength lieth; and it shall clearly appear unto any man of judgment, that the most which can be inferred upon such plenty of divine testimonies is only this: That some things which they maintain as far as some men can probably conjecture, do seem to have been out of Scripture not absurdly gathered. Is this a warrant sufficient for any man's conscience to build such proceedings upon, as have been and are put in use for the establishment of that cause? But to conclude, I would gladly understand how it cometh to pass, that they which so peremptorily do maintain that human authority is nothing worth, are in the cause which they favour so careful to have the common sort of men persuaded, that the wisest, the godliest, and the best learned in all Christendom are that way given, seeing they judge this to make nothing in the world for them? Again, how cometh it to pass they cannot abide that authority should be alleged on the other side, if there be no force at all in authorities on one side or other? Wherefore labour they to strip their adversaries of such furniture as doth not help? Why take they such needless pains to furnish also their own cause with the like? If it be void and to no purpose that the names of men are so frequent in their books, what did move them to bring them in, or doth to suffer them there remaining? Ignorant I am not how this is salved, "They do it but after the truth made manifest first by reason or by Scripture, they do it not but to control the enemies of truth, who bear themselves bold upon human authority making not for them but against them rather." Which answers are nothing. For in what place, or upon what consideration soever it be they do it, were it in their own opinion of no force being done, they would undoubtedly refrain to do it.

8. But to the end it may more plainly appear, what we are to judge of their sentences, and of the cause itself wherein they are alleged: first, it may not well be denied, *that all actions of men endued with the use of reason are*

generally either good or evil. For although it be granted that no action is properly termed good or evil, unless it be voluntary; yet this can be no let to our former assertion, that all actions of men endued with the use of reason are generally either good or evil; because even those things are done voluntarily by us, which other creatures do naturally, inasmuch as we might stay our doing of them if we would. Beasts naturally do take their food and rest, when it offereth itself unto them. If men did so too, and could not do otherwise of themselves, there were no place for any such reproofs as that of our Saviour Christ unto His disciples, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" That which is voluntarily performed in things tending to the end, if it be well done, must needs be done with deliberate consideration of some reasonable cause, wherefore we rather should do it than not. Whereupon it seemeth, that in such actions only those are said to be good or evil which are capable of deliberation: so that many things being hourly done by men, wherein they need not use with themselves any manner of consultation at all, it may perhaps hereby seem that well or ill-doing belongeth only to our weightier affairs, and to those deeds which are of so great importance that they require advice. But thus to determine were perilous, and peradventure unsound also. I do rather incline to think, that seeing all the unforced actions of men are voluntary; and all voluntary actions tending to the end have choice; and all choice presupposeth the knowledge of some cause wherefore we make it: where the reasonable cause of such actions so readily offereth itself, that it needeth not to be sought for; in those things though we do not deliberate, yet they are of their nature apt to be deliberated on, in regard of the will which may incline either way, and would not any one way bend itself, if there were not some apparent motive to lead it. Deliberation actual we use, when there is doubt what we should incline our wills unto. Where no doubt is, deliberation is not excluded as impertinent unto the thing, but as needless in regard of the agent, which seeth already what to resolve upon. It hath no apparent absurdity therefore in it to think that all actions of men endued with the use of reason, are generally either good or evil. Whatsoever is good, the same is also approved of God; and according unto the sundry degrees of goodness, the kinds of divine approbation are in like sort multiplied. Some things are

good, yet in so mean a degree of goodness, that men are only not disproved nor disallowed of God for them. No man hateth his own flesh. If ye do good unto them that do so to you the very publicans themselves do as much. They are worse than infidels that have no care to provide for their own. In actions of this sort, the very light of Nature alone may discover that which is so far forth in the sight of God allowable. Some things in such sort are allowed, that they be also required as necessary unto salvation, by way of direct, immediate and proper necessity final; so that without performance of them we cannot by ordinary course be saved, nor by any means be excluded from life observing them. In actions of this kind, our chiefest direction is from Scripture, for Nature is no sufficient teacher what we should do that we may attain unto life everlasting. The insufficiency of the light of Nature, is by the light of Scripture so fully and so perfectly herein supplied, that further light than this hath added there doth not need unto that end. Finally, some things although not so required of necessity, that to leave them undone excludeth from salvation, are notwithstanding of so great dignity and acceptance with God that most ample reward in heaven is laid up for them. Hereof we have no commandment either in Nature or Scripture which doth exact them at our hands: yet those motives there are in both, which draw most effectually our minds unto them. In this kind there is not the least action but it doth somewhat make to the accessory augmentation of our bliss. For which cause our Saviour doth plainly witness, that there shall not be as much as a cup of cold water bestowed for His sake without reward. Hereupon dependeth whatsoever difference there is between the states of saints in glory: hither we refer whatsoever belongeth unto the highest perfection of man by way of service towards God: hereunto that fervour and first love of Christians did bend itself, causing them to sell their possessions, and lay down the price at the blessed apostles' feet: hereat St. Paul undoubtedly did aim, in so far abridging his own liberty, and exceeding that which the bond of necessary and enjoined duty tied him unto. Wherefore, seeing that in all these several kinds of actions there can be nothing possibly evil which God approveth, *and that He approveth much more than He doth command; and that His very commandments in some kind, as, namely,*

His precepts comprehended in the law of Nature may be otherwise known than only by Scripture; and that to do them, howsoever we know them, must needs be acceptable in His sight: let them with whom we have hitherto disputed consider well how it can stand with reason to make the bare mandate of sacred Scripture the only rule of all good and evil in the actions of mortal men. The testimonies of God are true, the testimonies of God are perfect, the testimonies of God are all sufficient unto that end for which they were given. Therefore, accordingly we do receive them; we do not think that in them God hath omitted anything needful unto His purpose, and left His intent to be accomplished by our devisings. What the Scripture purposeth, the same in all points it doth perform. Howbeit that here we swerve not in judgment, one thing especially we must observe, namely, that the absolute perfection of Scripture is seen by relation unto that end whereto it tendeth. And even hereby it cometh to pass that, first, such as imagine the general and main drift of the body of sacred Scripture not to be so large as it is, nor that God did thereby intend to deliver, as in truth He doth, a full instruction in all things unto salvation necessary, the knowledge whereof man by nature could not otherwise in this life attain unto, they are by this very mean induced either still to look for new revelations from heaven, or else dangerously to add to the word of God uncertain tradition, that so the doctrine of man's salvation may be complete, which doctrine we constantly hold in all respects, without any such thing added, to be so complete that we utterly refuse as much as once to acquaint ourselves with anything further. Whatsoever to make up the doctrine of man's salvation is added as in supply of the Scripture's insufficiency, we reject it. Scripture, purposing this, hath perfectly and fully done it. Again, the scope and purpose of God in delivering the Holy Scripture, such as do take more largely than behoveth, they on the contrary side, racking and stretching it further than by Him was meant, are drawn into sundry as great inconveniences. These, pretending the Scripture's perfection, infer thereupon that in Scripture all things lawful to be done must needs be contained. We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereto they were instituted. As, therefore, God *created every part and particle of man exactly perfect, that*

is to say, in all points sufficient unto that use for which He appointed it, so the Scripture, yea, every sentence thereof, is perfect, and wanteth nothing requisite unto that purpose for which God delivered the same. So that if hereupon we conclude that because the Scripture is perfect therefore all things lawful to be done are comprehended in the Scripture, we may even as well conclude so of every sentence as of the whole sum and body thereof, unless we first of all prove that it was the drift, scope, and purpose of Almighty God in Holy Scripture to comprise all things which man may practise. But admit this, and mark, I beseech you, what would follow. God, in delivering Scripture to His Church, should clean have abrogated amongst them the law of Nature, which is an infallible knowledge imprinted in the minds of all the children of men, whereby both general principles for directing of human actions are comprehended and conclusions derived from them, upon which conclusions groweth in particularity the choice of good and evil in the daily affairs of this life. Admit this, and what shall the Scripture be but a snare and a torment to weak consciences, filling them with infinite perplexities, scrupulosities, doubts insoluble, and extreme despairs? Not that the Scripture itself doth cause any such thing, for it tendeth to the clean contrary, and the fruit thereof is resolute assurance and certainty in that it teacheth; but the necessities of this life urging men to do that which the light of Nature, common discretion, and judgment of itself directeth them unto. On the other side, this doctrine, teaching them that so to do were to sin against their own souls, and that they put forth their hands to iniquity, whatsoever they go about and have not first the sacred Scripture of God for direction, how can it choose but bring the simple a thousand times to their wit's end? How can it choose but vex and amaze them? For in every action of common life, to find out some sentence clearly and infallibly setting before our eyes what we ought to do (seem we in Scripture never so expert) would trouble us more than we are aware. In weak and tender minds we little know what misery this strict opinion would breed, besides the s'ops it would make in the whole course of all men's lives and actions. Make all things sin which we do *by direction* of Nature's light, and by the rule of *common discretion*, without thinking at all upon Scripture; admit *this p'osition*, and parents shall cause their children to sin

as oft as they cause them to do anything before they come to years of capacity and be ripe for knowledge in the Scripture. Admit this, and it shall not be with masters as it was with him in the Gospel, but servants, being commanded to go, shall stand still till they have their errand warranted unto them by Scripture ; which, as it standeth with Christian duty in some cases, so in common affairs to require it were most unfit. Two opinions, therefore, there are concerning sufficiency of Holy Scripture, each extremely opposite unto the other, and both repugnant unto truth. The schools of Rome teach Scripture to be insufficient, as if, except traditions were added, it did not contain all revealed and supernatural truth, which absolutely is necessary for the children of men in this life to know that they may in the next be saved. Others, justly condemning this opinion, grow likewise unto a dangerous extremity, as if Scripture did not only contain all things in that kind necessary, but all things simply, and in such sort that to do anything according to any other law were not only unnecessary but even opposite unto salvation, unlawful, and sinful. Whatsoever is spoken of God, or things appertaining to God, otherwise than as the truth is, though it seem an honour, it is an injury ; and as incredible praises given unto men do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation, so we must likewise take great heed lest, in attributing unto Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that doth cause even those things which indeed it hath most abundantly to be less reverently esteemed. I therefore leave it to themselves to consider whether they have in this first point or not overshot themselves, which God doth know is quickly done, even when our meaning is most sincere, as I am verily persuaded theirs in this case was.

The Third Book.

1. What the Church is, and in what respect laws of polity are thereunto necessarily required.
2. Whether it be necessary that some particular form of Church polity be set down in Scripture, since the things that belong particularly to any such form are not of necessity to salvation.
3. The matters of Church polity are different from matters of faith and salvation, and that they themselves so teach which are our reprovers for so teaching.
4. That hereby we take not from Scripture anything which thereunto with the soundness of truth may be given.
5. Their meaning who first urged against the polity of the Church of England, that nothing ought to be established in the Church more than is commanded by the word of God.
6. How great injury men by so thinking should offer unto all the Churches of God.
7. A shift notwithstanding to maintain it, by interpreting *commanded* as though it were meant that greater things only ought to be found set down in Scripture particularly, and lesser framed by the general rules of Scripture.
8. Another device to defend the same, by expounding *commanded* as if it did signify grounded on Scripture, and were opposed to things found out by light of natural reason only.
9. How laws for the polity of the Church may be made by the advice of men, and how those laws being not repugnant to the word of God are approved in His sight.
10. That neither God's being the author of laws, nor yet His committing of them to Scripture, is any reason sufficient to prove that they admit no addition or change.
11. Whether Christ must needs intend laws unchangeable altogether, or have forbidden anywhere to make any other law than Himself did deliver.

ALBEIT the substance of those controversies whereinto we have begun to wade, be rather of outward things appertaining to the Church of Christ than of anything wherein the nature and being of the Church consisteth, yet because the subject or matter which this position concerneth, is a form of Church Government or Church Polity, it therefore becometh us so far forth to consider the nature of the Church as is requisite for men's more clear and plain understanding, in what respect laws of polity or government are necessary thereunto. That Church of Christ which we properly term *His body* mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest

that are on earth (albeit their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds by intellectual conceit are able to apprehend, that such a real body there is, a body collective, because it containeth a huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in Scripture concerning the endless love and the saving mercy which God sheweth towards His Church, the only proper subject thereof is this Church. Concerning this flock it is that our Lord and Saviour hath promised: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands." They who are of this society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others as are not object unto our sense, only unto God, who seeth their hearts and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto Him they are clear and manifest. All men knew Nathanael to be an Israelite. But our Saviour, piercing deeper, giveth further testimony of him than men could have done with such certainty as He did, "Behold indeed an Israelite in whom there is no guile." If we profess as Peter did, that we love the Lord, and profess it in the hearing of men, charity is prone to believe all things, and therefore charitable men are likely to think we do so, as long as they see no proof to the contrary. But that our love is sound and sincere, that it cometh from a "pure heart and a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned," who can pronounce, saving only the Searcher of all men's hearts, who alone intuitively doth know in this kind who are His? And as those everlasting promises of love, mercy, and blessedness, belong to the mystical Church, even so on the other side when we read of any duty which the Church of God is bound unto, the Church whom this doth concern is a sensible known company. And this visible Church in like sort is but one, continued from the first beginning of the world to the last end. Which company being divided into two moieties, the one before, the other since the coming of Christ, that part which since the coming of Christ partly hath embraced, and partly shall hereafter embrace the Christian Religion, we term as by a more proper name the Church of Christ. And, therefore, the Apostle affirmeth plainly of all men Christian, *that be they Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, they are all*

incorporated into one company, they all make but one body. The unity of which visible body and Church of Christ consisteth in that uniformity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that One Lord, whose servants they all profess themselves; that one faith which they all acknowledge; that one baptism, wherewith they are all initiated. The visible Church of Jesus Christ is, therefore, one in outward profession of those things which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of Christianity, and are necessarily required in every particular Christian man. "Let all the House of Israel know for certainty," saith Peter, "that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, even this Jesus whom ye have crucified." Christians, therefore, they are not, which call not Him their Master and Lord. And from hence it came, that first at Antioch, and afterwards throughout the whole world, all that were of the Church visible were called Christians, even amongst the heathen, which name unto them was precious and glorious; but in the estimation of the rest of the world, even Christ Jesus himself was execrable, for whose sake all men were so likewise which did acknowledge Him to be their Lord. This Himself did foresee, and, therefore, armed His Church, to the end they might sustain it without discomfort. "All these things they will do unto you for My name's sake; yea, the time shall come, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God good service. These things I tell you, that when the hour shall come, ye may then call to mind how I told you beforehand of them." But our naming of Jesus Christ the Lord is not enough to prove us Christians, unless we also embrace that faith which Christ hath published unto the world. To show that the Angel of Pergamus continued in Christianity, behold how the Spirit of Christ speaketh, "Thou keepest My name, and thou hast not denied My faith." Concerning which faith, "The rule thereof," saith Tertullian, "is one alone, immovable, and no way possible to be better framed anew." What rule that is he showeth by rehearsing those few articles of Christian belief. And before Tertullian, Irenæus: "The Church though scattered throughout the whole world unto the uttermost borders of the earth, hath from the apostles and their disciples received belief." The parts of which *belief* he also reciteth in substance the very same with *Tertullian*, and thereupon inferreth: "This faith the Church

being spread far and wide preferreth, as if one house did contain them; these things it equally embraceth, as though it had even one soul, one heart, and no more; it publisheth, teacheth, and delivereth these things with uniform consent, as if God had given it but one only tongue wherewith to speak. He which amongst the guides of the Church is best able to speak uttereth no more than this, and less than this the most simple doth not utter," when they make profession of their faith. Now although we know the Christian faith, and allow of it, yet in this respect we are but entering; entered we are not into the visible Church, before our admittance by the door of baptism. Wherefore immediately upon the acknowledgment of Christian faith, the eunuch (we see) was baptized by Philip; Paul by Ananias; by Peter a huge multitude containing three thousand souls, which being once baptized, were reckoned in the number of souls added to the visible Church. As for those virtues that belong unto moral righteousness and honesty of life, we do not mention them, because they are not proper unto Christian men, as they are Christian, but do concern them, as they are men. True it is, the want of these virtues excludeth from salvation. So doth much more the absence of inward belief of heart; so doth despair and lack of hope; so emptiness of Christian love and charity. But we speak now of the visible Church, whose children are signed with this mark, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." In whomsoever these things are, the Church doth acknowledge them for her children; them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers, in whom these things are not found. For want of these it is that Saracens, Jews, and infidels are excluded out of the bounds of the Church. Others we may not deny to be of the visible Church, as long as these things are not wanting in them. For apparent it is, that all men are of necessity either Christians or not Christians. If by external profession they be Christians, then are they of the visible Church of Christ; and Christians by external profession they are all, whose mark of recognisance hath in it those things which we have mentioned, yea although they be impious idolaters, wicked heretics, persons excommunicable, yea and cast out for notorious improbity. Such withal we deny not to be the imps and limbs of Satan, even as long as they continue such. Is it then possible that the *self-same men should* belong both to the Synagogue of Satan,

and to the Church of Jesus Christ? Unto that Church which is His mystical body, not possible; because that body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God. Howbeit of the visible body and Church of Jesus Christ, those may be, and oftentimes are, in respect of the main parts of their outward profession; who in regard of their inward disposition of mind, yea, of external conversation, yea even of some parts of their very profession, are most worthily both hateful in the sight of God himself, and in the eyes of the sounder parts of the visible Church most execrable. Our Saviour, therefore, compareth the kingdom of Heaven to a net, whereunto all which cometh, neither is nor seemeth fish; His Church He compareth unto a field, where tares manifestly known and seen by all men doth grow intermingled with good corn, and even so shall continue till the final consummation of the world. God hath had ever, and ever shall have, some Church visible upon earth. When the people of God worshipped the calf in the wilderness; when they adored the brazen serpent; when they feared the Gods of nations; when they bowed their knees to Baal; when they burnt incense and offered sacrifice unto idols; true it is, the wrath of God was most fiercely inflamed against them, their prophets justly condemned them as an adulterous seed and a wicked generation of miscreants, which had forsaken the living God, and of Him were likewise forsaken, in respect of that singular mercy wherewith He kindly and lovingly embraceth His faithful children. Howbeit retaining the law of God, and the holy zeal of His covenant; the sheep of His visible flock they continued even in the depth of their disobedience and rebellion. Wherefore, not only amongst them God always had His Church, because He had thousands which never bowed their knees to Baal; but whose knees were bowed unto Baal, even they were also of the visible Church of God. Nor did the prophet so complain, as if that Church had been quite and clean extinguished; but he took it as though there had not been remaining in the world any besides himself, that carried a true and an upright heart towards God, with care to serve him according unto his holy will. For lack of diligent *observing the difference*, first between the Church of God *mystical and visible*, then between the visible sound and

corrupted, sometimes more, sometimes less ; the oversights are neither few nor light that have been committed. This deceiveth them, and nothing else, who think that in the time of the first world the family of Noah did contain all that were of the visible Church of God. From hence it grew, and from no other cause in the world, that the African bishops in the Council of Carthage, knowing how the administration of baptism belongeth only to the Church of Christ, and supposing that heretics, which were apparently severed from the sound believing Church, could not possibly be of the Church of Jesus Christ, thought it utterly against reason, that baptism administered by men of corrupt belief should be accounted as a sacrament. And, therefore, in maintenance of rebaptization, their arguments are built upon the fore-alleged ground that heretics are not at all any part of the Church of Christ. Our Saviour founded His Church on a rock and not upon heresy ; power of baptizing He gave to His apostles, unto heretics He gave it not. Wherefore, they that are without the Church, and oppose themselves against Christ, do but scatter His sheep and flock ; without the Church baptize they cannot. Again, are heretics Christians, or are they not ? If they be Christians, wherefore remain they not in God's Church ? If they be no Christians, how make they Christians ? Or to what purpose shall those words of the Lord serve, " He which is not with Me, is against Me : " and " He which gathereth not with Me, scattereth. " Wherefore, evident it is, that upon misbegotten children and the brood of Antichrist, without rebaptization the Holy Ghost cannot descend. But none in this case so earnest as Cyprian : I know no baptism but one, and that in the Church only ; none without the Church, where he that doth cast out the devil, hath the devil : he doth examine about belief, whose lips and words do breathe forth a canker : the faithless doth offer the articles of faith, a wicked creature forgiveth wickedness, in the name of Christ Antichrist signeth, he which is cursed of God blesseth, a dead carrion promiseth life, a man unpeaceable giveth peace, a blasphemer calleth upon the name of God, a profane person doth exercise priesthood, a sacrilegious wretch doth prepare the altar, and in the neck of all these that evil also cometh, the Eucharist, a very bishop of the devil, doth presume to consecrate. *All this was true, but not sufficient to prove that*

heretics were in no sort any part of the visible Church of Christ, and consequently their baptism no baptism. This opinion, therefore, was afterwards both condemned by a better advised Council, and also revoked by the chiefest of the authors thereof themselves. What is it but only the self-same error and misconceit, wherewith others being at this day likewise possessed, they ask us where our Church did lurk, in what cave of the earth it slept for so many hundreds of years together before the birth of Martin Luther? As if we were of opinion that Luther did erect a new Church of Christ. No, the Church of Christ which was from the beginning, is, and continueth unto the end. Of which Church all parts have not been always equally sincere and sound. In the days of Abiah it plainly appeareth that Judah was by many degrees more free from pollution than Israel, as that solemn oration sheweth wherein he pleadeth for the one against the other in this wise: "O Jeroboam and all Israel hear you me, Have ye not driven away the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, and have made you priests like the people of nations? Whosoever cometh to consecrate with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. But we belong unto the Lord our God, and have not forsaken Him; and the priests the sons of Aaron minister unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt offerings and sweet incense, and the bread is set in order upon the pure table, and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof to burn every evening; for we keep the watch of the Lord our God, but ye have forsaken Him." In St. Paul's time the integrity of Rome was famous; Corinth many ways reprov'd, they of Galatia much more out of square. In St. John's time Ephesus and Smyrna in far better state than Thyatira and Pergamus were. We hope, therefore, that to reform ourselves, if at any time we have done amiss, is not to sever ourselves from the Church we were of before. In the Church we were, and we are so still. Other difference between our estate before and now, we know none but only such as we see in Judah, which having sometime been idolatrous, became afterwards more soundly religious by renouncing idolatry and superstition. "If Ephraim be *joined unto idols*," the counsel of the prophet is, "Let him *alone*. If Israel play the harlot, let not Judah sin." If it

seem evil unto you, saith Joshua, to serve the Lord, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods whom your fathers served beyond the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell ; but I and mine house will serve the Lord." The indisposition, therefore, of the Church of Rome to reform herself, must be no stay unto us from performing our duty to God ; even as desire of retaining conformity with them, could be no excuse if we did not perform that duty. Notwithstanding, so far as lawfully we may, we have held, and do hold fellowship with them. For even as the apostle doth say of Israel, that they are in one respect enemies, but in another beloved of God ; in like sort with Rome we dare not communicate concerning sundry her gross and grievous abominations ; yet touching those main parts of Christian truth wherein they constantly still persist, we gladly acknowledge them to be of the family of Jesus Christ, and our hearty prayer unto God Almighty is, that being conjoined so far forth with them, they may at the length (if it be His will) so yield to frame and reform themselves, that no distraction remain in anything, but that we all may with one heart and one mouth, glorify God the Father of our Lord and Saviour, whose Church we are. As there are which make the Church of Rome utterly no Church at all, by reason of so many, so grievous errors in their doctrines : so we have them amongst us, who under pretence of imagined corruptions in our discipline, do give even as hard a judgment of the Church of England itself. But whatsoever either the one sort or the other teach, we must acknowledge even heretics themselves to be, though a main part, yet a part of the visible Church. If an infidel should pursue to death an heretic professing Christianity, only for Christian profession sake, could we deny unto him the honour of martyrdom? Yet this honour all men know to be proper unto the Church. Heretics, therefore, are not utterly cut off from the visible Church of Christ. If the Fathers do anywhere, as oftentimes they do, make the true visible Church of Christ and heretical companies opposite, they are to be construed as separating heretics not altogether from the company of believers, but from the fellowship of sound believers. For where professed unbelief is, there can be no visible Church of Christ ; there may be, where sound belief wanteth. Infidels being clean *without the Church*, deny directly and utterly reject the very

principles of Christianity, which heretics embrace, and err only by misconstruction, whereupon their opinions although repugnant indeed to the principles of Christian faith, are, notwithstanding, by them held otherwise, and maintained as most consonant thereunto. Wherefore being Christians in regard of the general truth of Christ which they openly profess, yet they are by the Fathers everywhere spoken of, as men clean excluded out of the right believing Church, by reason of their particular errors, for which all that are of a sound belief must needs condemn them. In this consideration the answer of Calvin unto Farell concerning the children of Popish parents doth seem crazed: "Whereas," saith he, "you ask our judgment about a matter, whereof there is doubt amongst you, whether ministers of our order, professing the pure doctrine of the Gospel, may lawfully admit unto baptism an infant whose father is a stranger unto our Churches, and whose mother hath fallen from us unto the Papacy, so that both the parents are Popish, thus we have thought good to answer, namely, that it is an absurd thing for us to baptize them which cannot be reckoned members of our body. And since Papists children are such we see not how it should be lawful to minister baptism unto them." Sounder a great deal is the answer of the Ecclesiastical College of Geneva unto Knox, who, having signified unto them that himself did not think it lawful to baptize bastards or the children of idolaters (he meaneth Papists), or of persons excommunicate, till either the parents had by repentance submitted themselves unto the Church, or else their children being grown unto the years of understanding should come and sue for their own baptism; "For thus thinking," saith he, "I am thought to be over severe, and that not only by them which are Popish, but even in their judgments also who think themselves maintainers of the truth." Master Knox's oversight herein they controlled. Their sentence was, "Wheresoever the profession of Christianity hath not utterly perished and been extinct, infants are beguiled of their right, if the common seal be denied them." Which conclusion in itself is sound, although it seemeth the ground is but weak whereupon they build it. For the reason which they yield of their sentence is this: "The promise which God doth make to the faithful concerning their seed, reacheth unto a thousand generations, it resteth not only in the first degree of descent. Infants,

therefore, whose great-grandfathers have been holy and godly do, in that respect, belong to the body of the Church, although the fathers and grandfathers of whom they descend have been apostates, because the tenure of the grace of God which did adopt them three hundred years ago and more in their ancient predecessors, cannot with justice be defeated and broken off by their parent's impiety coming between." By which reason of theirs, although it seem that all the world may be baptized, inasmuch as no man living is a thousand descents removed from Adam himself, yet we mean not at this time either to uphold or to overthrow it, only their alleged conclusion we embrace, so it be construed in this sort, "That forasmuch as men remain in the visible Church, till they utterly renounce the profession of Christianity, we may not deny unto infants their right by withholding from them the public sign of holy baptism, if they be born where the outward acknowledgment of Christianity is not clean gone and extinguished." For being in such sort born, their parents are within the Church, and therefore their birth doth give them interest and right in baptism. Albeit not every error and fault, yet heresies and crimes which are not actually repented of and forsaken, exclude quite and clean from that salvation, which belongeth unto the mystical body of Christ; yea, they also make a separation from the visible sound Church of Christ, altogether from the visible Church neither the one nor the other doth sever. As for the act of excommunication, it neither shutteth out from the mystical, nor clean from the visible, but only from fellowship with the visible in holy duties. With what congruity then doth the Church of Rome deny that her enemies, whom she holdeth always for heretics, do at all appertain to the Church of Christ, when her own do freely grant, that albeit the Pope, as they say, cannot teach heresy nor propound error, he may, notwithstanding, himself worship idols, think amiss concerning matters of faith, yea, give himself unto acts diabolical, even being Pope? How exclude they us from being any part of the Church of Christ under the colour and pretence of heresy, when they cannot but grant it possible even for him to be as touching his own personal persuasion heretical, who in their opinion not only is of the Church, but holdeth the chiefest place of authority over the same? But of these things we are not now to dispute. *That which already we have set down is for our*

present purpose sufficient. By the Church, therefore, in this question we understand no other than only the visible Church. For preservation of Christianity there is not anything more needful than that such as are of the visible Church have mutual fellowship and society one with another. In which consideration, as in the main body of the sea being one, yet within divers precincts hath divers names, so the Catholic Church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct societies, every of which is termed a Church within itself. In this sense the Church is always a visible society of men—not an assembly but a society. For although the name of the Church be given unto Christian assemblies, although any multitude of Christian men congregated may be termed by the name of a Church, yet assemblies properly are rather things that belong to a Church. Men are assembled for performance of public actions, which actions being ended, the assembly dissolveth itself and is no longer in being; whereas the Church which was assembled, doth no less continue afterwards than before. “Where but three are, and they of the laity also,” saith Tertullian, “yet there is a Church,” that is to say, a Christian assembly. But a Church, as now we are to understand it, is a society, that is, a number of men belonging unto some Christian fellowship, the place and limits whereof are certain. That wherein they have communion, is the public exercise of such duties as those mentioned in the Apostles’ Acts: Instruction, breaking of bread, and prayers. As therefore they that are of the mystical body of Christ have those inward graces and virtues whereby they differ from all others which are not of the same body; again, whosoever appertain to the visible body of the Church, they have also the notes of external profession, whereby the world knoweth what they are, after the same manner even the several societies of Christian men unto every of which the name of a Church is given with addition betokening severally, as the Church of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, England, and so the rest, must be endued with correspondent general properties belonging unto them, as they are public Christian societies. And of such properties common unto all societies Christian, it may not be denied, that one of the very chiefest is Ecclesiastical Polity. Which word I therefore the rather use, because the *name of government* as commonly men understand it in *ordinary speech*, doth not comprise the largeness of that

whereunto in this question it is applied. For when we speak of government, what doth the greatest part conceive thereby, but only the exercise of superiority peculiar unto rulers and guides of others? To our purpose therefore the name of Church polity will better serve, because it containeth both government and also whatsoever besides belongeth to the ordering of the Church in public. Neither is anything in this degree more necessary than Church polity, which is a form of ordering the public spiritual affairs of the Church of God.

2. But we must note, that he which affirmeth speech to be necessary amongst all men throughout the world doth not thereby import that all men must necessarily speak one kind of language. Even so the necessity of polity and regiment in all Churches may be held, without holding any one certain form to be necessary in them all. Nor is it possible that any form of polity, much less of polity ecclesiastical, should be good, unless God himself be author of it. "Those things that are not of God," saith Tertullian, "they can have no other than God's adversary for their author." Be it whatsoever in the Church of God, if it be not of God, we hate it. Of God it must be, either as those things sometime were which God supernaturally revealed, and so delivered them unto Moses for government of the commonwealth of Israel; or else as those things which men find out by help of that light, which God hath given them unto that end. The very law of Nature itself, which no man can deny but God hath instituted, is not of God, unless that be of God, whereof God is the author as well this later way as the former. But forasmuch as no form of Church polity is thought by them to be lawful, or to be of God, unless God be so the author of it, that it be also set down in Scripture, they should tell us plainly whether their meaning be that it must be there set down in whole or in part. For if wholly, let them show what one form of polity ever was so. Their own to be so taken out of Scripture they will not affirm; neither deny they that in part even this which they so much oppugn is also from thence taken. Again they should tell us, whether only that be taken out of Scripture which is actually and particularly there set down; or else that also, which the general principles and rules of Scripture potentially contain. The one way they cannot as much as pretend, that all the *parts of their own discipline* are in Scripture; and the other *way their mouths* are stopped, when they would plead

against all other forms besides their own ; seeing the general principles are such as do not particularly prescribe any one, but sundry may equally be consonant unto the general axioms of the Scripture. But to give them some larger scope, and not to close them up in these straits : let their allegations be considered, wherewith they earnestly bend themselves against all which deny it necessary that any one complete form of Church polity should be in Scripture. First, therefore, whereas it hath been told them that matters of faith, and in general matters necessary unto salvation, are of a different nature from ceremonies, order, and the kind of Church government, that the one is necessary to be expressly contained in the word of God, or else manifestly collected out of the same, the other not so ; that it is necessary not to receive the one unless there be something in Scripture for them, the other free, if nothing against them may thence be alleged : although there do not appear any just or reasonable cause to reject or dislike of this, nevertheless, as it is not easy to speak to the contentation of minds exulcerated in themselves, but that somewhat there will be always which displeaseth, so herein for two things we are reproved ; the first is misdistinguishing, because matters of discipline and Church government are (as they say) matters necessary to salvation, and of faith, whereas we put a difference between the one and the other ; our second fault is injurious dealing with the Scripture of God, as if it contained only the principal points of religion, some rude and unfashioned matter of building the Church, but had left out that which belongeth unto the form and fashion of it, as if there were in the Scripture no more than only to cover the Church's nakedness, and not chains, bracelets, rings, jewels to adorn her ; sufficient to quench her thirst, to kill her hunger, but not to minister a more liberal and (as it were) a more delicious and dainty diet. In which case our apology shall not need to be very long.

3. The mixture of those things by speech, which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error. To take away therefore that error which confusion breedeth, distinction is requisite. Rightly to distinguish is by conceit of mind to sever things different in nature, and to discern wherein they differ. So that if we imagine a difference *where there is none*, because we distinguish where we should *not*, it may not be denied that we misdistinguish. The only

trial whether we do so, yea or no, dependeth upon comparison between our conceit and the nature of things conceived. Touching matters belonging to the Church of Christ this we conceive, that they are not of one suit. Some things are merely of faith, which things it doth suffice that we know and believe; some things are not only to be known but done, because they concern the actions of men. Articles about the Trinity are matters of mere faith, and must be believed. Precepts concerning the works of charity are matters of action, which to know, unless they be practised, is not enough. This being so clear to all men's understanding I somewhat marvel that they especially should think it absurd to oppose Church government a plain matter of action unto matters of faith, who know that themselves divide the Gospel into doctrine and discipline. For if matters of discipline be rightly by them distinguished from matters of doctrine, why not matters of government by us as reasonably set against matters of faith? Do not they under doctrine comprehend the same which we intend by matters of faith? Do not they under discipline comprise the regiment of the Church? When they blame that in us, which themselves follow, they give men great cause to doubt that some other thing than judgment doth guide their speech. What the Church of God standeth bound to know or do the same in part Nature teacheth. And because Nature can teach them but only in part, neither so fully as is requisite for man's salvation, nor so easily as to make the way plain and expedite enough, that many may come to the knowledge of it and so be saved, therefore in Scripture hath God both collected the most necessary things, that the school of Nature teacheth unto that end; and revealeth also whatsoever we neither could with safety be ignorant of, nor at all be instructed in but by supernatural revelation from Him. So that Scripture containing all things that are in this kind any way needful for the Church, and the principal of the other sort, this is the next thing wherewith we are charged as with an error: we teach that whatsoever is unto salvation termed necessary by way of excellency, whatsoever it standeth all men upon to know or do that they may be saved, whatsoever there is whereof it may truly be said, "This not to believe is eternal death and damnation," or, "This every soul that will live must duly observe," of which sort the Articles of Christian Faith and the Sacra-

ments of the Church of Christ are, all such things if Scripture did not comprehend the Church of God should not be able to measure out the length and the breadth of that way wherein for ever she is to walk, heretics and schismatics never ceasing, some to abridge, some to enlarge, all to pervert and obscure the same. But as for those things that are accessory thereunto, those things that so belong to the way of salvation as to alter them is no otherwise to change that way than a path is changed by altering only the uppermost face thereof, which be it laid with gravel, or set with grass, or paved with stone, remaineth still the same path, in such things because discretion may teach the Church what is convenient, we hold not the Church further tied herein unto Scripture than that against Scripture nothing be admitted in the Church, lest that path which ought always to be kept even do thereby come to be overgrown with brambles and thorns. If this be unsound, wherein doth the point of unsoundness lie? It is not that we make some things necessary, some things accessory and appendant only. For our Lord and Saviour himself doth make that difference by terming judgment, and mercy, and fidelity, with other things of like nature, the greater and weightier matters of the law. Is it then in that we account ceremonies (wherein we do not comprise sacraments, or any other the like substantial duties in the exercise of religion, but only such external rites as are usually annexed unto Church actions), is it an oversight that we reckon these things and matters of government in the number of things accessory, not things necessary in such sort as hath been declared? Let them which therefore think us blameable consider well their own words. Do they not plainly compare the one unto garments which cover the body of the Church, the other unto rings, bracelets, and jewels that only adorn it? the one to that food which the Church doth live by, the other to that which maketh her diet liberal, dainty, and more delicious? Is dainty fare a thing necessary to the sustenance, or to the clothing of the body rich attire? If not, how can they urge the necessity of that which themselves resemble by things not necessary? Or by what construction shall any man living be able to make those comparisons true, holding that distinction untrue which *putteth a difference* between things of external regiment in *the Church* and things necessary unto salvation?

✧ 4. Now, as it can be to Nature no injury that of her we say the same which diligent beholders of her works have observed, namely, that she provideth for all living creatures nourishment which may suffice, that she bringeth forth no kind of creature whereto she is wanting in that which is needful ; although we do not so far magnify her exceeding bounty as to affirm that she bringeth into the world the sons of men adorned with gorgeous attire, or maketh costly buildings to spring up out of the earth for them. So I trust that to mention what the Scripture of God leaveth unto the Church's discretion in some things, is not in anything to impair the honour which the Church of God yieldeth to the sacred Scriptures' perfection. ✧ Wherein seeing that no more is by us maintained than only that Scripture must needs teach the Church whatsoever is in such sort necessary as hath been set down ; and that it is no more disgrace for Scripture to have left a number of other things free to be ordered at the discretion of the Church, than for Nature to have left it unto the wit of man to devise his own attire, and not to look for it as the beasts of the field have theirs. If neither this can import, nor any other proof sufficient be brought forth, that we either will at any time or ever did affirm the sacred Scripture to comprehend no more than only those bare necessities ; if we acknowledge that as well for particular application to special occasions as also in other manifold respects infinite treasures of wisdom are over and besides abundantly to be found in the Holy Scripture ; yea, that scarcely there is any noble part of knowledge worthy the mind of man but from thence it may have some direction and light ; yea, that although there be no necessity it should of purpose prescribe any one particular form of Church government ; yet touching the manner of governing in general the precepts that Scripture setteth down are not few, and the examples many which it proposeth for all Church governors, even in particularities to follow ; yea, that those things finally which are of principal weight in the very particular form of Church polity (although not that form which they imagine, but that which we against them uphold) are in the selfsame Scriptures contained : if all this be willingly granted by us, which are accused to pin the word of God in so narrow room, as that it should be able to direct us but in *principal points* of our religion, or as though the substance

of religion or some rude and unfashioned matter of building the Church were uttered in them, and those things left out that should pertain to the form and fashion of it; let the cause of the accused be referred to the accusers' own conscience, and let that judge whether this accusation be deserved where it hath been laid.

5. But so easy it is for every man living to err, and so hard to wrest from any man's mouth the plain acknowledgment of error, that what hath been once inconsiderately defended, the same is commonly persisted in, as long as wit by whetting itself is able to find out any shift, be it never so slight, whereby to escape out of the hands of present contradiction. So that it cometh herein to pass with men unadvisedly fallen into error, as with them whose state hath no ground to uphold it, but only the help which by subtle conveyance they draw out of casual events arising from day to day, till at length they be clean spent. They which first gave out that, "Nothing ought to be established in the Church which is not commanded by the word of God," thought this principle plainly warranted by the manifest words of the law; "Ye shall put nothing unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye take ought therefrom, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you." Wherefore having an eye to a number of rites and orders in the Church of England, as marrying with a ring, crossing in the one sacrament, kneeling at the other, observing of festival days more than only that which is called the Lord's day, enjoining abstinence at certain times from some kinds of meat, churching of women after child-birth, degrees taken by divines in universities, sundry church offices, dignities, and callings, for which they found no commandment in the Holy Scripture, they thought by the one only stroke of that axiom to have cut them off. But that which they took for an oracle, being sifted, was repelled. True it is concerning the word of God, whether it be by misconstruction of the sense, or by falsification of the words, wittingly to endeavour that anything may seem divine which is not, or anything not seem which is, were plainly to abuse and even to falsify divine evidence, which injury offered but unto men is most worthily counted heinous. Which point I wish they did well observe, with *whom nothing is more familiar than to plead in these causes, "The law of God, the word of the Lord:"* who notwith-

standing when they come to allege what word and what law they mean, their common ordinary practice is, to quote by-speeches in some historical narration or other, and to urge them as if they were written in most exact form of law. What is to add to the law of God, if this be not? When that which the word of God doth but deliver historically, we construe it without any warrant as if it were legally meant, and so urge it further than we can prove that it was intended, do we not add to the laws of God, and make them in number seem more than they are? It standeth us upon to be careful in this case. For the sentence of God is heavy against them that wittingly shall presume thus to use the Scripture.

6. But let that which they do hereby intend be granted them; let it once stand as consonant to reason, that because we are forbidden to add to the law of God anything, or to take aught from it, therefore we may not for matters of the Church make any law more than is already set down in Scripture: who seeth not what sentence it shall enforce us to give against all Churches in the world, inasmuch as there is not one but hath had many things established in it, which though the Scripture did never command, yet for us to condemn were rashness. Let the Church of God even in the time of our Saviour Christ serve for example unto all the rest. In their domestical celebration of the Passover, which supper they divided (as it were) into two courses, what Scripture did give commandment that between the first and the second, He that was chief should put off the residue of His garments, and keeping on his feast-robe only, wash the feet of them that were with Him? What Scripture did command them never to lift up their hands unwashed in prayer unto God, which custom Aristæus (be the credit of the author more or less) sheweth wherefore they did so religiously observe? What Scripture did command the Jews every festival day to fast till the sixth hour? The custom both mentioned by Josephus in the history of his own life, and by the words of Peter signified. Tedious it were to rip up all such things, as were in that Church established, yea by Christ himself and by His apostles observed, though not commanded anywhere in Scripture.

7. Well, yet a gloss there is to colour that paradox, and notwithstanding all this, still to make it appear in show not to be altogether unreasonable. And therefore till further

reply come, the cause is held by a feeble distinction ; that the commandments of God being either general or special, although there be no express word for everything in specialty, yet there are general commandments for all things, to the end that even such cases as are not in Scripture particularly mentioned, might not be left to any to order at their pleasure, only with caution that nothing be done against the word of God ; and that for this cause the apostle hath set down in Scripture four general rules, requiring such things alone to be received in the Church as do best and nearest agree with the same rules, that so all things in the Church may be appointed, not only not against, but by and according to, the word of God. The rules are these, " Nothing scandalous or offensive unto any, especially unto the Church of God ; all things in order and with seemliness ; all unto edification ; finally, all to the glory of God." Of which kind how many might be gathered out of the Scripture if it were necessary to take so much pains ? Which rules they that urge, minding thereby to prove that nothing may be done in the Church but what Scripture commandeth, must needs hold that they tie the Church of Christ no otherwise than only because we find them there set down by the finger of the Holy Ghost. So that unless the Apostle by writing had delivered those rules to the Church, we should by observing them have sinned as now by not observing them. In the Church of the Jews it is not granted that the appointment of the hour for daily sacrifices, the building of synagogues throughout the land to hear the word of God and to pray in when they came not up to Jerusalem, the erecting of pulpits and chairs to teach in, the order of burial, the rites of marriage, with such like, being matters appertaining to the Church, yet are not anywhere prescribed in the law, but were by the Church's discretion instituted ? What then shall we think ? Did they hereby add to the law, and so displease God by that which they did ? None so hardly persuaded of them. Doth their law deliver unto them the selfsame general rules of the Apostle, that framing thereby their orders they might in that respect clear themselves from doing amiss ? St. Paul would then of likelihood have cited them out of the law, which we see he doth not. The truth is, they are rules and canons of that law which is written in all men's hearts ; *the Church had for ever no less than now stood bound to observe them, whether the Apostle had mentioned them or*

no. Seeing, therefore, those canons do bind, as they are edicts of Nature, which the Jews observing as yet unwritten, and thereby framing such Church orders as in their law were not prescribed, are notwithstanding in that respect unculpable, it followeth that sundry things may be lawfully done in the Church so as they be not done against the Scripture, although no Scripture do command them, but the Church, only following the light of reason, judge them to be in discretion meet. Secondly, unto our purpose, and for the question in hand, whether the commandments of God in Scripture be general or special, it skilleth not; for if being particularly applied they have, in regard of such particulars, a force constraining us to take some one certain thing of many, and to leave the rest, whereby it would come to pass that any other particular but that one being established, the general rules themselves in that case would be broken, then is it utterly impossible that God should leave anything, great or small, free for the Church to establish or not. Thirdly, if so be they shall grant, as they cannot otherwise do, that these rules are no such laws as require any one particular thing to be done, but serve rather to direct the Church in all things which she doth, so that free and lawful it is to devise any ceremony, to receive any order, and to authorize any kind of regiment, no special commandment being thereby violated; and the same being thought such by them to whom the judgment thereof appertaineth, as that it is not scandalous, but decent, tending unto edification, and setting forth the glory of God, that is to say, agreeable unto the general rules of Holy Scripture, this doth them no good in the world for the furtherance of their purpose. That which should make for them must prove that men ought not to make laws for Church regiment, but only keep those laws which in Scripture they find made. The plain intent of the book of ecclesiastical discipline is to show that men may not devise laws of Church government, but are bound for ever to use and to execute only those which God himself hath already devised and delivered in the Scripture. The selfsame drift the admonitioners also had in urging that nothing ought to be done in the Church according unto any law of man's devising, but all according to that which God in His word hath commanded, which not remembering, they gather out of Scripture general rules to be followed in making laws,

and so in effect they plainly grant that we ourselves may lawfully make laws for the Church, and are not bound out of Scripture only to take laws already made, as they meant who first alleged that principle whereof we speak. One particular platform it is which they respected, and which they laboured thereby to force upon all Churches, whereas these general rules do not let, but that there may well enough be sundry. It is the particular order established in the Church of England which thereby they did intend to alter, as being not commanded of God, whereas unto those general rules they know we do not defend that we may hold anything unconformable. Obscure it is not what meaning they had who first gave out that grand axiom, and according unto that meaning it doth prevail far and wide with the favourers of that part. Demand of them wherefore they conform not themselves unto the order of our Church, and in every particular their answer for the most part is, "We find no such thing commanded in the word," whereby they plainly require some special commandment for that which is exacted at their hands, neither are they content to have matters of the Church examined by general rules and canons. As, therefore, in controversies between us and the Church of Rome, that which they practise is many times even according to the very grossness of that which the vulgar sort conceiveth, when that which they teach to maintain it is so nice and subtle that hold can very hardly be taken thereupon, in which cases we should do the Church of God small benefit by disputing with them according unto the finest points of their dark conveyances, and suffering that sense of their doctrine to go uncontrolled wherein by the common sort it is ordinarily received and practised; so considering what disturbance hath grown in the Church amongst ourselves, and how the authors thereof do commonly build altogether on this as a sure foundation, "Nothing ought to be established in the Church which in the word of God is not commanded," were it reason that we should suffer the same to pass without controlment in that current meaning whereby everywhere it prevaieth, and stay till some strange construction were made thereof, which no man would lightly have thought on, but being driven thereunto for a shift?

8. *The last refuge in maintaining this position is thus to construe it: "Nothing ought to be established in the Church but that*

which is commanded in the word of God," that is to say, all Church orders must be grounded upon the word of God, in such sort grounded upon the word, not that being found out by some star or light of reason, or learning, or other help, they may be received, so they be not against the word of God, but according at leastwise unto the general rules of Scripture they must be made. Which is in effect as much as to say, "We know not what to say well in defence of this position; and therefore, lest we should say it is false, there is no remedy but to say that in some sense or other it may be true, if we could tell how." First that Scholie had need of a very favourable reader, and a tractable, that should think it plain construction, when to be commanded in the word, and grounded upon the word, are made all one. If when a man may live in the state of matrimony, seeking that good thereby which Nature principally desireth, he make rather choice of a contrary life in regard of St. Paul's judgment; that which he doeth is manifestly grounded upon the word of God, yet not commanded in His word, because without breach of any commandment he might do otherwise. Secondly, whereas no man in justice and reason can be reproved, for those actions which are framed according unto that known will of God, whereby they are to be judged; and the will of God which we are to judge our actions by, no sound divine in the world ever denied to be in part made manifest even by light of Nature and not by Scripture alone; if the Church being directed by the former of these two (which God hath given who gave the other, that man might in different sort be guided by them both), if the Church I say do approve and establish that which thereby it judgeth meet, and findeth not repugnant to any word or syllable of Holy Scripture, who shall warrant our presumptuous boldness, controlling herein the Church of Christ? But so it is, the name of the light of Nature is made hateful with men; the star of reason and learning, and all other such like helps, beginneth no otherwise to be thought of than if it were an unlucky comet, or as if God had so accursed it, that it should never shine or give light in things concerning our duty any way towards him, but be esteemed as that star in the Revelation called "Wormwood," which being fallen from heaven, maketh rivers and waters, in which it falleth, so bitter, that men tasting them die thereof. A number there are who think *they cannot admire as they ought the power and authority*

of the word of God, if in things divine they should attribute any force to man's reason. For which cause they never use reason so willingly as to disgrace reason. Their usual and common discourses are unto this effect: first, "The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Secondly, it is not for nothing that St. Paul giveth charge to "beware of philosophy," that is to say, such knowledge as men by natural reason attain unto. Thirdly, consider them that have from time to time opposed themselves against the Gospel of Christ, and most troubled the Church with heresy. Have they not always been great admirers of human reason? Hath their deep and profound skill in secular learning made them the more obedient to the truth, and not armed them rather against it? Fourthly, they that fear God will remember how heavy His sentences are in this case: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will cast away the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made the wisdom of this world foolishness? Seeing the world by wisdom knew not God in the wisdom of God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save believers." Fifthly, the word of God in itself is absolute, exact, and perfect. The word of God is a two-edged sword: as for the weapons of natural reason they are as the armour of Saul, rather cumbersome about the soldier of Christ than needful. They are not of force to do that which the apostles of Christ did by the power of the Holy Ghost. "My preaching," therefore saith Paul, "hath not been in the enticing speech of man's wisdom; but in plain evidence of the spirit of power; that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Sixthly, if I believe the Gospel there needeth no reasoning about it to persuade me: if I do not believe, it must be the Spirit of God, and not the reason of man that shall convert my heart unto Him. By these and the like disputes an opinion hath spread itself very far in the world as if the way to be ripe in faith were to be raw in wit and judgment; as if reason were an enemy unto religion, childish simplicity the mother of ghostly and divine wisdom. The cause why such declamations prevail so *greatly is, for that men suffer themselves in two respects to be deluded; one is, that the wisdom of man being debased*

either in comparison with that of God, or in regard of some special thing, exceeding the reach and compass thereof, it seemeth to them (not marking so much) as if simply it were condemned; another, that learning, knowledge, or wisdom falsely so termed, usurping a name whereof they are not worthy, and being under that name controlled, their reproof is by so much the more easily misapplied, and through equivocation wrested against those things whereunto so precious names do properly and of right belong. This duly observed doth to the former allegations itself make sufficient answer. Howbeit, for all men's plainer and fuller satisfaction, first concerning the inability of reason to search out and to judge of things divine; if they be such as those properties of God, and those duties of men towards Him, which may be conceived by attentive consideration of heaven and earth we know that of mere natural men, the apostle testifieth, how they "knew both God, and the law of God." Other things of God there be, which are neither so found, nor, though they be showed, can ever be approved, without the special operation of God's good grace and spirit. Of such things sometime spake the Apostle St. Paul, declaring how Christ had called him to be a witness of His death and resurrection from the dead, according to that which the prophets and Moses had foreshowed. Festus, a mere natural man, an infidel, a Roman, one whose ears were unacquainted with such matter, heard him; but could not reach unto that whereof he spake; the suffering and the rising of Christ from the dead, he rejecteth as idle superstitious fancies, not worth the hearing. The apostle that knew them by the spirit, and spake of them with power of the Holy Ghost, seemed in his eyes but learnedly mad. Which example maketh manifest what elsewhere the same apostle teacheth, namely, that Nature hath need of grace, whereunto I hope we are not opposite, by holding that grace hath use of Nature. Secondly, philosophy we are warned to take heed of: not that philosophy, which is true and sound knowledge attained by natural discourse of reason, but that philosophy which to bolster heresy or error, casteth a fraudulent show of reason upon things which are indeed unreasonable, and by that means as by a stratagem spoileth the simple which are not able to withstand such cunning. "Take heed lest any spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit." He that *exhorteth to beware of an enemy's policy, doth not give counsel*

to be impolitic ; but rather to use all prudent foresight and circumspection, lest our simplicity be over-reached by cunning sleights. The way not to be inveigled by them that are so guileful through skill, is thoroughly to be instructed in that which maketh skilful against guile, and to be armed with that true and sincere philosophy which doth teach against that deceitful and vain, which spoileth. Thirdly, but many great philosophers have been very unsound in belief. And many sound in belief have been also great philosophers. Could secular knowledge bring the one sort unto the love of Christian faith? Nor Christian faith the other sort out of love with secular knowledge. The harm that heretics did, they did it unto such as were unable to discern between sound and deceitful reasoning ; and the remedy against it was ever the skill which the ancient fathers had to descry and discover such deceit. Insomuch that Cresconius the heretic complained greatly of St. Augustine, as being too full of logical subtleties. Heresy prevailleth only by a counterfeit show of reason, whereby notwithstanding it becometh invincible, unless it be convicted of fraud by manifest remonstrance, clearly true and unable to be withstood. When, therefore, the Apostle requireth ability to convict heretics, can we think he judgeth it a thing unlawful, and not rather needful to use the principal instrument of their conviction, the light of reason? It may not be denied but that in the Fathers' writings there are sundry sharp invectives against heretics, even for their very philosophical reasonings. The cause whereof Tertullian confesseth, not to have been any dislike conceived against the kind of such reasonings, but the end. "We may," saith he, "even in matters of God, be made wiser by reasons drawn from the public persuasions which are grafted in men's minds, so they be used to further the truth, not to bolster error, so they make with, not against that which God hath determined. For there are some things even known by nature, as the immortality of the soul unto many, our God unto all. I will, therefore, myself also use the sentence of some such as Plato, pronouncing every soul immortal. I myself too will use the secret acknowledgment of the commonalty, bearing record of the God of gods, but when I hear men allege, that which is dead is dead, and, while thou *art alive be alive* ; and, after death an end of all, even of *death itself*, then will I call to mind both that the heart

of the people with God is accounted dust, and that the very wisdom of the world is pronounced folly. If then an heretic fly also unto such vicious, popular and secular conceits, my answer unto him shall be : thou heretic, avoid the heathen, although in this ye be one, that ye both belie God, yet thou that dost this under the name of Christ, differest from the heathen in that thou seemest to thyself a Christian. Leave him, therefore, his conceits, seeing that neither will he learn thine. Why dost thou having sight trust to a blind guide, thou which hast put on Christ take raiment of him that is naked ? If the Apostle have armed thee, why dost thou borrow a stranger's shield ? Let him rather learn of thee to acknowledge, than thou of him to renounce, the resurrection of the flesh." In a word, the Catholic Fathers did good unto all by that knowledge, whereby heretics, hindering the truth in many, might have furthered therewith themselves, but that obstinately following their own ambitious or otherwise corrupted affections, instead of framing their wills to maintain that which reason taught, they bent their wits to find how reason might seem to teach that which their wills were set to maintain. For which cause the Apostle saith of them justly that they are, for the most part, *αὐτοκατάκριτοι* men condemned even in and of themselves. For, though they be not all persuaded that it is truth which they withstand, yet that to be error which they uphold, they might undoubtedly the sooner a great deal attain to know, but that their study is more to defend what once they have stood in, than to find out sincerely and simply what truth they ought to persist in for ever. Fourthly, there is in the world no kind of knowledge whereby any part of truth is seen, but we justly account it precious, yea, that principal truth, in comparison whereof all other knowledge is vile, may receive from it some kind of light. Whether it be that Egyptian and Chaldaean wisdom mathematical, wherewith Moses and Daniel were furnished ; or that natural, moral, and civil wisdom, wherewith Solomon excelled all men, or that rational and oratorial wisdom of the Grecians, which the Apostle St. Paul brought from Tarsus, or that Judaical, which he learned at Jerusalem sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, to detract from the dignity thereof were to injury even God himself, who, being that light which none can approach unto, hath sent out these *lights whereof we are capable, even as so many sparkles*

resembling the bright fountain from which they rise. But there are that bear the title of wise men, and scribes, and great disputers of the world, and are nothing indeed less than what in show they most appear. These being wholly addicted unto their own wills, use their wit, their learning, and all the wisdom they have, to maintain that which their obstinate hearts are delighted with, esteeming, in the frantic error of their minds, the greatest madness in the world to be wisdom, and the highest wisdom foolishness. Such were both Jews and Grecians, which professed the one sort legal, and the other secular skill, neither enduring to be taught the mystery of Christ, unto the glory of whose most blessed name, who so study to use both their reason and all other gifts, as well which Nature as which grace hath endued them with, let them never doubt but that the same God, who is to destroy and confound utterly that wisdom falsely so named in others, doth make reckoning of them as of true scribes. Scribes by wisdom instructed to the kingdom of heaven, scribes against that kingdom hardened in a vain opinion of wisdom, which in the end being proved folly, must needs perish, true understanding, knowledge, judgment and reason, continuing for evermore. Fifthly, unto the Word of God, being in respect of that end for which God ordained it, perfect, exact, and absolute in itself, we do not add reason as a supplement of any main or defect therein, but as a necessary instrument, without which we could not reap by the Scriptures perfection, that fruit and benefit which it yieldeth. The Word of God is a two-edged sword, but in the hands of reasonable men, and reason as the weapon that slew Goliath, if they be as David was that use it. Touching the Apostles, He which gave them from above such power for miraculous confirmation of that which they taught, endued them also with wisdom from above to teach that which they so did confirm. Our Saviour made choice of twelve simple and unlearned men, that the greater their lack of natural wisdom was, the more admirable that might appear which God supernaturally endued them with from heaven. Such therefore as knew the poor and silly estate wherein they had lived, could not but wonder to hear the wisdom of their speech, and be so much the more attentive unto their teaching. They studied for no tongue *they spake withal*; of themselves they were rude and *knew not so much* as how to premeditate, the spirit gave

them speech and eloquent utterance. But because with St. Paul it was otherwise than with the rest, inasmuch, as he never conversed with Christ upon earth as they did ; and his education had been scholastical altogether, which theirs was not : hereby occasion was taken by certain malignants, secretly to undermine his great authority in the Church of Christ, as though the Gospel had been taught him by others than, by Christ himself, and as if the cause of the Gentiles' conversion and belief through his means, had been the learning and skill which he had by being conversant in their books, which thing made them so willing to hear him, and him so able to persuade them ; whereas the rest of the apostles prevailed, because God was with them, and by miracle from heaven confirmed His word in their mouths. They were mighty in deeds. As for him, being absent, his writings had some force, in presence his power not like unto theirs. In some, concerning his preaching, their very byword was, *Λόγος ἐξουθενήμενος*, addle speech, empty talk. His writings full of great words, but in the power of miraculous operations his presence not like the rest of the apostles. Hereupon it ariseth, that St. Paul was so often driven to make his apologies. Hereupon it ariseth, that whatsoever time he had spent in the study of human learning, he maketh earnest protestation to them of Corinth, that the Gospel which he had preached amongst them, did not by other means prevail with them, than with others the same Gospel taught by the rest of the apostles of Christ. "My preaching," saith he, "hath not been in the persuasive speeches of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith may not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." What is it which the Apostle doth here deny? Is it denied that his speech amongst them had been persuasive? No, for of him the sacred history plainly testifieth, that for the space of a year and a-half he spake in their Synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Grecians. How then is the speech of men made persuasive? Surely there can be but two ways to bring this to pass, the one human, the other divine. Either St. Paul did only by art and natural industry cause his own speech to be credited ; or else God by miracle did authorize it, and so bring credit thereunto, as to the speech of the rest of the apostles. Of which two the former he utterly denieth. For why? If the

preaching of the rest had been effectual by miracle, his only by force of his own learning, so great inequality between him and the other apostles in this thing had been enough to subvert their faith. For might they not with reason have thought, that if he were sent of God as well as they, God would not have furnished them and not him with the power of the Holy Ghost? Might not a great part of them being simple happily have feared lest their assent had been cunningly gotten unto his doctrine, rather through the weakness of their own wits, than the certainty of that truth which he had taught them? How unequal had it been that all believers through the preaching of other apostles should have their faith strongly built upon the evidence of God's own miraculous approbation, and they whom He had converted should have their persuasion built only upon his skill and wisdom who persuaded them? As therefore calling from men may authorize us to teach, although it could not authorize him to teach as other apostles did: so although the wisdom of man had not been sufficient to enable him such a teacher as the rest of the apostles were, unless God's miracles had strengthened both the one and the other's doctrine; yet unto our hability both of teaching and learning the truth of Christ, as we are but mere Christian men, it is not a little which the wisdom of man may add. Sixthly, yea, whatsoever our hearts be to God and to His truth, believe we, or be we as yet faithless, for our conversion or confirmation the force of natural reason is great. The force whereof unto those effects is nothing without grace. What then? To our purpose it is sufficient, that whosoever doth serve, honour and obey God, whosoever believeth in Him, that man would no more do this than innocents and infants do, but for the light of natural reason that shineth in him, and makes him apt to apprehend those things of God, which being by grace discovered, are effectual to persuade reasonable minds and none other, that honour, obedience and credit belong aright unto God. No man cometh unto God to offer Him sacrifice, to pour out supplications and prayers before Him, or to do Him any service which does not first believe Him both to be, and to be a rewarder of them who in such sort seek unto Him. *Let men be taught this either by revelation from heaven, or by instruction upon earth, by labour, study and meditation, or by the only secret inspiration of the Holy Ghost;*

whatsoever the mean be they know it by, if the knowledge thereof were possible without discourse of natural reason, why should none be found capable thereof but only men, nor men till such time as they come unto ripe and full hability to work by reasonable understanding? The whole drift of the Scripture of God, what is it but only to teach theology? Theology, what is it but the science of things divine? What science can be attained unto without the help of natural discourse and reason? "Judge you of that which I speak," saith the Apostle. In vain it were to speak anything of God, but that by reason men are able somewhat to judge of that they hear, and by discourse to discern how consonant it is to truth. Scripture indeed teacheth things above Nature, things which our reason by itself could not reach unto. Yet those things also we believe, knowing by reason that the Scripture is the word of God. In the presence of Festus a Roman, and of King Agrippa, a Jew, St. Paul omitting the one, who neither knew the Jews' religion nor the books whereby they taught it, speaks unto the other of things foreshown by Moses and the Prophets, and performed in Jesus Christ; intending thereby to prove himself so unjustly accused, that unless his judges did condemn both Moses and the Prophets, him they could not choose but acquit, who taught only that fulfilled which they so long since had foretold. His cause was easy to be discerned; what was done their eyes were witnesses: what Moses and the Prophets did speak, their books could quickly show, it was no hard thing for him to compare them, which knew the one, and believed the other. King Agrippa, believeth thou the Prophets? I know thou dost. The question is, how the books of the Prophets came to be credited of King Agrippa. For what with him did authorize the Prophets, the like with us doth cause the rest of the Scripture of God to be of credit. Because we maintain, that in Scripture we are taught all things necessary unto salvation, hereupon very childishly it is by some demanded, what Scripture can teach us the sacred authority of the Scripture, upon the knowledge whereof our whole faith and salvation dependeth. As though there were any kind of science in the world which leadeth men into knowledge, without presupposing a number of things already known. No science doth make known the first principles whereon it *buildeth*, but they are always either taken as plain and

manifest in themselves, or as proved and granted already, some former knowledge having made them evident. Scripture teacheth all supernaturally revealed truth, without the knowledge whereof salvation cannot be attained. The main principle whereupon our belief of all things therein contained dependeth is, that the Scriptures are the oracles of God himself. This in itself we cannot say is evident. For then all men that hear it would acknowledge it in heart, as they do when they hear that every whole is more than any part of that whole, because this in itself is evident. The other we know that all do not acknowledge when they hear it. There must be, therefore, some former knowledge presupposed, which doth herein assure the hearts of all believers. Scripture teacheth us that saving truth which God hath discovered unto the world by revelation, and it presumeth us taught otherwise that itself is divine and sacred. The question then being by what means we are taught this; some answer, that to learn it we have no other way than only tradition, as, namely, that so we believe, because both we from our predecessors, and they from theirs have so received. But is this enough? That which all men's experience teacheth them may not in anywise be denied. And by experience we all know, that the first outward motive leading men so to esteem of the Scripture is the authority of God's Church. For when we know the whole Church of God hath that opinion of the Scripture, we judge it even at the first an impudent thing for any man bred and brought up in the Church to be of a contrary mind without cause. Afterwards the more we bestow our labour in reading or hearing the mysteries thereof, the more we find that the thing itself doth answer our received opinion concerning it. So that the former inducement prevailing somewhat with us before, doth now much more prevail, when the very thing hath ministered farther reason. If infidels or atheists chance at any time to call it in question this giveth us occasion to sift what reason there is, whereby the testimony of the Church concerning Scripture, and our own persuasion which Scripture itself hath confirmed, may be proved a truth infallible. In which case the ancient Fathers being often constrained to show what warrant they had so much to rely upon the Scriptures, endeavoured still *to maintain the authority of the Books of God by arguments such as unbelievers themselves must needs think reasonable*

if they judged thereof as they should. Neither is it a thing impossible or greatly hard, even by such kind of proofs so to manifest and clear that point, that no man living shall be able to deny it, without denying some apparent principle, such as all men acknowledge to be true. Wherefore if I believe the Gospel, yet is reason of singular use, for that it confirmeth me in this my belief the more ; if I do not as yet believe, nevertheless to bring me into the number of believers except reason did somewhat help, and were an instrument which God doth use unto such purposes, what should it boot to dispute with infidels or godless persons for their conversion and persuasion in that point. Neither can I think that when grave and learned men do sometimes hold, that of this principle there is no proof but by the testimony of the Spirit, which assureth our hearts therein, it is their meaning to exclude utterly all force which any kind of reason may have in that behalf, but I rather incline to interpret such their speeches, as if they had more expressly set down, that other motives and inducements, be they never so strong and consonant unto reason, are notwithstanding effectual of themselves to work faith concerning this principle, if the special grace of the Holy Ghost concur not to the enlightening of our minds. For otherwise I doubt not but men of wisdom and judgment will grant, that the Church in this point especially is furnished with reason to stop the mouths of her impious adversaries, and that as it were altogether bootless to allege against them what the Spirit hath taught us, so, likewise, that even to our own selves it needeth caution and explication, how the testimony of the Spirit may be discerned, by what means it may be known, lest men think that the Spirit of God doth testify those things which the spirit of error suggesteth. The operations of the Spirit, especially these ordinary which be common unto all true Christian men, are as we know, things secret and undiscernible even to the very soul where they are, because their nature is of another and an higher kind than that they can be by us perceived in this life. Wherefore, albeit the Spirit lead us into all truth, and direct us into all goodness, yet because these workings of the Spirit in us are so privy and secret, we therefore stand on a plainer ground, when we gather by reason from the quality of things believed or done, that the Spirit of God hath directed us in both, than if we

settle ourselves to believe or to do any certain particular thing, as being moved thereto by the Spirit. But of this enough. To go from the books of Scripture to the sense and meaning thereof, because the sentences which are by the apostles recited out of the Psalms to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ did not prove it, if so be the Prophet David meant them of himself, this exposition therefore they plainly disprove, and show, by manifest reason, that of David the words of David could not possibly be meant. Exclude the use of natural reasoning about the sense of Holy Scripture concerning the Articles of our faith, and then that the Scripture doth concern the Articles of our faith, who can assure us? That which by right exposition buildeth up Christian faith, being misconstrued, breedeth error between true and false construction, the difference reason must show. Can Christian men perform that which Peter requireth at their hands? Is it possible they should both believe and be able, without the use of reason, to render a reason of their belief—a reason sound and sufficient to answer them that demand it, be they of the same faith with us or enemies thereunto? May we cause our faith without reason to appear reasonable in the eyes of men? This being required even of learners in the school of Christ, the duty of their teachers in bringing them unto such ripeness must needs be somewhat more than only to read the sentences of Scripture, and then paraphrastically to scholy them, to vary them with sundry forms of speech without arguing or disputing about anything which they contain. This method of teaching may commend itself unto the world by that easiness and facility which is in it, but a law or a pattern it is not, as some do imagine, for all men to follow that will do good in the Church of Christ. Our Lord and Saviour Himself, did hope by disputation to do some good, yea, by disputation not only of, but against, the truth, albeit with purpose for the truth. That Christ should be the son of David was truth, yet against this truth our Lord in the Gospel objecteth. If Christ be the son of David, how doth David call Him Lord? There is as yet no way known how to dispute, or to determine of things disputed, without the use of natural reason. If we please *to add unto Christ their example, who followed Him as near in all things as they could, the sermon of Paul and Barnabas set down in the Acts, where the people would have offered*

unto them sacrifice ; in that sermon what is there but only natural reason to disprove their act ? " O men, why do you these things ? We are men even subject to the selfsame passions with you ; we preach unto you to leave these vanities and to turn to the living God, the God that hath not left Himself without witness in that He hath done good to the world, giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling our heart with joy and gladness." Neither did they only use reason in winning such unto Christian belief as were yet thereto unconverted, but with believers themselves they followed the selfsame course. In that great and solemn assembly of believing Jews how doth Peter prove that the Gentiles were partakers of the grace of God as well as they, but by reason drawn from those effects, which were apparently known amongst them ? " God which knoweth hearts hath borne them witness in giving unto them the Holy Ghost as unto you." The light therefore which the star of natural reason and wisdom casteth is too bright to be obscured by the mist of a word or two, uttered to diminish that opinion which justly hath been received concerning the force and virtue thereof, even in matters that touch most nearly the principal duties of men and the glory of the eternal God. In all which hitherto hath been spoken touching the force and use of man's reason in things divine, I must crave that I be not so understood or construed as if any such thing by virtue thereof could be done without the aid and assistance of God's most blessed Spirit. The thing we have handled according to the question moved about it : which question is whether the light of reason be so pernicious that in devising laws for the Church men ought not by it to search what may be fit and convenient. For this cause therefore we have endeavoured to make it appear how in the nature of reason itself there is no impediment, but that the selfsame Spirit which revealeth the things that God hath set down in His law, may also be thought to aid and direct men in finding out by the light of reason what laws are expedient to be made for the guiding of His Church over and besides them that are in Scripture. Herein therefore we agree with those men by whom human laws are defined to be ordinances which such as have lawful authority given them for that purpose do probably draw from the laws of Nature and God, by discourse of reason, aided with the influence of divine grace. And for that

cause it is not said amiss touching ecclesiastical canons that by "instinct of the Holy Ghost they have been made, and consecrated by the reverend acceptation of the world.

9. Laws for the Church are not made as they should be unless the makers follow such direction as they ought to be guided by. Wherein that Scripture standeth not the Church of God in any stead, or serveth nothing at all to direct, but may be let pass as needless to be consulted with, we judge it profane, impious, and irreligious to think. For although it were in vain to make laws which the Scripture hath already made, because what we are already there commanded to do on our parts there resteth nothing but only that it be executed; yet because both in that which we are commanded, it concerneth the duty of the Church by law to provide that the looseness and slackness of men may not cause the commandments of God to be unexecuted, and a number of things there are for which the Scripture hath not provided by any law, but left them unto the careful discretion of the Church; we are to search how the Church in these cases may be well directed to make that provision by laws which is most convenient and fit. And what is so in these cases, partly Scripture and partly reason must teach to discern. Scripture comprehending examples and laws, laws some natural and some positive, examples neither are there for all cases which require laws to be made, and when they are they can but direct as precedents only. Natural laws direct in such sort that in all things we must for ever do according unto them; positive, so that against them in no case we may do anything, as long as the will of God is that they should remain in force. Howbeit, when Scripture doth yield us precedents, how far forth they are to be followed; when it giveth natural laws, what particular order is thereunto most agreeable; when positive, which way to make laws unrepugnant unto them; yea, though all these should want yet what kind of ordinances would be most for that good of the Church which is aimed at, all this must be by reason found out. And, therefore, "To refuse the conduct of the light of Nature," saith St. Augustine, "is not folly alone, but accompanied with impiety." The greatest amongst the school divines, *studying* how to set down by exact definition the nature of *a human law* (of which nature all the Church's constitutions are), found not which way better to do it than in these

words, "Out of the precepts of the law of Nature, as out of certain common and undemonstrable principles, man's reason doth necessarily proceed unto certain more particular determinations, which particular determinations being found out according unto the reason of man, they have the names of human laws, so that such other conditions be therein kept as the making of laws doth require," that is, if they whose authority is thereunto required do establish and publish them as laws. And the truth is that all our controversy in this cause concerning the orders of the Church is, what particulars the Church may appoint. That which doth find them out is the force of man's reason. That which doth guide and direct his reason is, first, the general law of Nature, which law of Nature and the moral law of Scripture are in the substance of law all one. But because there are also in Scripture a number of laws particular and positive, which being in force may not by any law of man be violated, we are in making laws to have thereunto an especial eye. As for example, it might perhaps seem reasonable unto the Church of God, following the general laws concerning the nature of marriage, to ordain in particular that cousins-german shall not marry. Which law notwithstanding ought not to be received in the Church if there should be in the Scripture a law particular to the contrary, forbidding utterly the bonds of marriage to be so far forth abridged. The same Thomas, therefore, whose definition of human laws we mentioned before, doth add thereunto this caution concerning the rule and canon whereby to make them : " Human laws are measures in respect of men whose actions they must direct, howbeit such measures they are, as have also their higher rules to be measured by, which rules are two, the law of God and the law of Nature. So that laws human must be made according to the general laws of Nature, and without contradiction unto any positive law in Scripture, otherwise they are ill made. Unto laws thus made and received by a whole Church, they which live within the bosom of that Church must not think it a matter indifferent either to yield or not to yield obedience. Is it a small offence to despise the Church of God ? " My son, keep thy father's commandment," saith Solomon, " and forget not thy mother's instruction, bind them both always about thine heart." It doth not stand with the duty which we owe to our heavenly Father, that to the ordinances of

our Mother the Church we should show ourselves disobedient. Let us not say we keep the commandments of the one, when we break the law of the other, for unless we observe both we obey neither. And what doth let, but that we may observe both, when they are not the one to the other in any sort repugnant? For of such laws only we speak, as being made in form and manner already declared, can have in them no contradiction unto the laws of Almighty God. Yea, that which is more, the laws thus made God himself doth in such sort authorize, that to despise them is to despise in them Him. It is a loose and licentious opinion which the Anabaptists have embraced, holding that a Christian man's liberty is lost, and the soul which Christ hath redeemed unto Himself injuriously drawn into servitude under the yoke of human power, if any law be now imposed besides the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in obedience whereunto the Spirit of God, and not the constraint of men, is to lead us, according to that of the blessed Apostle, "Such as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God," and not such as live in thralldom unto men. Their judgment is, therefore, that the Church of Christ should admit no law-makers but the Evangelists. The author of that which causeth another thing to be, is author of that thing also which thereby is caused. The light of natural understanding, wit, and reason, is from God; He it is which thereby doth illuminate every man entering into the world. If there proceed from us anything afterwards corrupt and naught, the mother thereof is our own darkness, neither doth it proceed from any such cause whereof God is the author. He is the author all that we think or do by virtue of that light which Himself hath given. And therefore the laws which the very heathens did gather to direct their actions by, so far forth as they proceeded from the light of Nature, God himself doth acknowledge to have proceeded even from Himself, and that He was the writer of them in the tables of their hearts. How much more, then, is He the author of those laws which have been made by His saints, endued further with the heavenly grace of His Spirit, and directed as much as might be with such instructions as His sacred word doth yield? Surely if we have unto those laws that dutiful regard *which their dignity doth require*, it will not greatly need *that we should be exhorted to live in obedience unto them.* *If they have God himself for their author, contempt which is offered unto them cannot choose but redound unto Him.*

The safest, and unto God the most acceptable, way of framing our lives therefore is, with all humility, lowliness and singleness of heart, to study which way our willing obedience both unto God and man may be yielded, even to the utmost of that which is due.

10. Touching the mutability of laws that concern the regiment and polity of the Church, changed they are, when either altogether abrogated, or in part repealed or augmented with farther additions. Wherein we are to note that this question about the changing of laws concerneth only such laws as are positive, and do make that now good or evil by being commanded or forbidden, which otherwise of itself were not simply the one or the other. Unto such laws it is expressly sometimes added how long they are to continue in force. If this be nowhere expressed, then have we no light to direct our judgments concerning the changeableness or immutability of them, but by considering the nature and quality of such laws. The nature of every law must be judged of by the end for which it was made, and by the aptness of things therein prescribed unto the same end. It may so fall out that the reason why some laws of God were given, is neither opened nor possible to be gathered by wit of man. As why God should forbid Adam that one tree, there was no way for Adam ever to have certainly understood. And at Adam's ignorance of this point Satan took advantage, urging the more securely a false cause, because the true was unto Adam unknown. Why the Jews were forbidden to plough their ground with an ox and an ass, why to clothe themselves with mingled attire of wool and linen, both it was unto them, and unto us it remaineth obscure. Such laws cannot, perhaps, be abrogated, saving only by whom they were made, because the intent of them being known unto none but the author He alone can judge how long it is requisite they should endure. But if the reason why things were instituted may be known, and being known do appear manifestly to be of perpetual necessity, then are those things also perpetual, unless they cease to be effectual unto that purpose for which they were at the first instituted. Because when a thing doth cease to be available unto the end which gave it being, the continuance of it must then of necessity appear superfluous. And of this we cannot be ignorant, how sometimes that hath done great good, which afterwards when time hath changed the ancient course of things, doth grow to be either very hurtful, or not

so greatly profitable and necessary. If, therefore, the end for which a law provideth be perpetually necessary, and the way whereby it provideth perpetually also most apt, no doubt but that every such law ought for ever to remain unchangeable. Whether God be the author of laws, by authorizing that power of men whereby they are made, or by delivering them made immediately from Himself, by word only, or in writing also, or howsoever, notwithstanding the authority of their maker, the mutability of that end for which they are made doth also make them changeable. The law of ceremonies came from God. Moses had commandment to commit it unto the sacred records of Scripture, where it continueth even unto this very day and hour; in force still as the Jew surmiseth, because God himself was author of it, and for us to abolish what He hath established were presumption most intolerable. But (that which they in the blindness of their obdurate hearts are not able to discern) since the end for which that law was ordained is now fulfilled, past and gone; how should it but cease any longer to be which hath no longer any cause of being in force as before? That which necessity of some special time doth cause to be enjoined, bindeth no longer than during that time, but doth afterwards become free. Which thing is also plain, even by that law which the apostles assembled at the council of Jerusalem did from thence deliver unto the Church of Christ, the preface whereof to authorize it was, to the Holy Ghost, and to us it hath seemed good, which style they did not use as matching themselves in power with the Holy Ghost, but as testifying the Holy Ghost to be the author, and themselves but only utterers of that decree. This law, therefore, to have proceeded from God as the author thereof, no faithful man will deny. It was of God, not only because God gave them the power whereby they might make laws, but for that it proceeded even from the holy motion and suggestion of that secret Divine Spirit, whose sentence they did but only pronounce. Notwithstanding, as the law of ceremonies delivered unto the Jews, so this very law which the Gentiles received from the mouth of the Holy Ghost, is in like respect abrogated by decease of the end for which it was given. But such as do not stick at this point, *such as grant* that what hath been instituted upon any *special cause*, needeth not to be observed that cause ceas-

ing, do notwithstanding herein fail; they judge the laws of God only by the author and main end for which they were made, so that for us to change that which He hath established, they hold it execrable pride and presumption, if so be the end and purpose for which God by that means provideth be permanent. And upon this they ground those ample disputes concerning orders and offices, which being by Him appointed for the government of His Church, if it be necessary always that the Church of Christ be governed, then doth the end for which God provided remain still; and therefore in those means which He, by law, did establish as being fittest unto that end, for us to alter anything is to lift up ourselves against God, and as it were to countermand Him. Wherein they mark not that laws are instruments to rule by, and that instruments are not only to be framed according unto the general end for which they are provided, but even according unto that very particular which riseth out of the matter whereon they have to work. The end wherefore laws were made, may be permanent, and those laws, nevertheless, require some alteration, if there be any unfitness in the means which they prescribe as tending unto that end and purpose. As, for example, a law that to bridle theft doth punish thieves with a quadruple restitution, hath an end which will continue as long as the world itself continueth. Theft will be always, and will always need to be, bridled. But that the means which this law provideth for that end, namely, the punishment of quadruple restitution, that this will be always sufficient to bridle and restrain that kind of enormity, no man can warrant. Insufficiency of laws doth sometimes come by want of judgment in the makers. Which cause cannot fall into any law termed properly and immediately divine, as it may and doth into human laws often. But that which hath been once most sufficient, may wax otherwise by alteration of time and place; that punishment which hath been sometimes forcible to bridle sin, may grow afterwards too weak and feeble. In a word, we plainly perceive by the difference of those three laws which the Jews received at the hands of God, the moral, ceremonial, and judicial, that if the end for which, and the matter according whereunto God maketh His laws, continue always one and the same, His laws also do the like, for which cause the moral law cannot be altered; *secondly, that whether the matter whereon laws are made*

continue or continue not, if their end have once ceased, they cease also to be of force, as in the law ceremonial it fareth. Finally, that albeit the end continue, as in the law of theft specified, and in a great part of those ancient judicials it doth; yet forasmuch as there is not in all respects the same subject or matter remaining for which they were first instituted, even this is sufficient cause of change. And therefore laws, though both ordained of God himself, and the end for which they were ordained continuing, may notwithstanding cease, if by alteration of persons or times they be found insufficient to attain unto that end. In which respect why may we not presume that God doth even call for such change or alteration as the very condition of things themselves doth make necessary? They which do therefore plead the authority of the law-maker, as an argument wherefore it should not be lawful to change that which He hath instituted, and will have this the cause why all the ordinances of our Saviour are immutable; they which urge the wisdom of God as a proof, that whatsoever laws He hath made they ought to stand, unless Himself from heaven proclaim them disannulled, because it is not in man to correct the ordinance of God, may know, if it please them to take notice thereof, that we are far from presuming to think that men can better anything which God hath done, even as we are from thinking that men should presume to undo some things of men which God doth know they cannot better. God never ordained anything that could be bettered. Yet many things He hath, that have been changed, and that for the better. That which succeedeth as better now when change is requisite, had been worse when that which now is changed was instituted. Otherwise God had not then left this to choose that, neither would now reject that to choose this, were it not for some new-grown occasion making that which hath been better worse. In this case, therefore, men do not presume to change God's ordinance, but they yield thereunto, requiring itself to be changed. Against this it is objected, that to abrogate or innovate the Gospel of Christ, if men or angels should attempt, it were most heinous and cursed sacrilege. And the Gospel, as they say, containeth not only doctrine instructing men how they should believe, but also precepts concerning the regiment of the Church. *Discipline, therefore, is a part of the Gospel; and God being the author of the whole Gospel, as well of discipline as of*

doctrine, it cannot be but that both of them have a common cause. So that as we are to believe for ever the articles of Evangelical doctrine, so the precepts of discipline we are in like sort bound for ever to observe. Touching points of doctrine, as for example the unity of God, the trinity of persons, salvation by Christ, the resurrection of the body, life everlasting, the judgment to come, and such like, they have been since the first hour that there was a Church in the world, and till the last they must be believed. But as for matters of regiment, they are for the most part of another nature. To make new articles of faith and doctrine no man thinketh it lawful; new laws of government what commonwealth or Church is there which maketh not either at one time or another? "The rule of faith," saith Tertullian, "is but one, and that alone immovable, and impossible to be framed or cast anew." The law of outward order and polity not so. There is no reason in the world wherefore we should esteem it as necessary always to do as always to believe the same things; seeing every man knoweth that the matter of faith is constant, the matter contrariwise of action daily changeable, especially the matter of action belonging unto Church polity. Neither can I find that men of soundest judgment have any otherwise taught than that articles of belief, and things which all men must of necessity do to the end they may be saved, are either expressly set down in Scripture, or else plainly thereby to be gathered. But touching things which belong to discipline and outward polity, the Church hath authority to make canons, laws, and decrees, even as we read that in the apostles' times it did. Which kind of laws (forasmuch as they are not in themselves necessary to salvation) may, after they are made, be also changed as the difference of times or places shall require. Yea it is not denied I am sure by themselves, that certain things in discipline are of that nature, as they may be varied by times, places, persons, and other the like circumstances. Whereupon I demand, are those changeable points of discipline commanded in the word of God, or no? If they be not commanded, and yet may be received in the Church, how can their former position stand, condemning all things in the Church which in the word are not commanded? If they be commanded, and yet may suffer change, how can this latter stand, affirming all things immutable which are commanded of

God? Their distinction touching matters of substance and of circumstance, though true, will not serve. For be they great things or be they small, if God have commanded them in the Gospel, and His commanding them in the Gospel do make them unchangeable, there is no reason we should more change the one than we may the other. If the authority of the Maker do prove unchangeableness in the laws which God hath made, then must all laws which He hath made be necessarily for ever permanent, though they be but of circumstance only and not of substance. I therefore conclude, that neither God's being author of laws for government of His Church, nor His committing them unto Scripture is any reason sufficient, wherefore all Churches should for ever be bound to keep them without change. But of one thing we are here to give them warning by the way. For whereas in this discourse we have oftentimes professed that many parts of discipline or Church polity are delivered in Scripture, they may perhaps imagine that we are driven to confess their discipline to be delivered in Scripture, and that having no other means to avoid it, we are fain to argue for the changeableness of laws ordained even by God himself, as if otherwise theirs of necessity should take place, and that under which we live be abandoned: there is no remedy therefore but to abate this error in them, and directly to let them know that if they fall into any such conceit they do but a little flatter their own cause. As for us, we think in no respect so highly of it. Our persuasion is, that no age ever had knowledge of it but only ours; that they which defend it, devised it; that neither Christ nor His apostles at any time taught it, but the contrary. If, therefore, we did seek to maintain that which most advantageth our own cause, the very best way for us, and the strongest against them, were to hold even as they do, that in Scripture there must needs be found some particular form of Church polity which God hath instituted, and which for that very cause belongeth to all Churches, to all times. But with any such partial eye to respect ourselves, and by cunning to make those things seem the truest which are the fittest to serve our purpose, is a thing which we neither like nor mean to follow. Wherefore that which we take to be generally true concerning the mutability of laws, the same *we have plainly delivered*, as being persuaded of nothing *more than we are of this*, that whether it be in matter of

speculation or of practice, no untruth can possibly avail the patron and defender long, and that things most truly are likewise most behovefully spoken.

11. This we hold and grant for truth, that those very laws which of their own nature are changeable, be notwithstanding incapable of change, if He which gave them, being of authority so to do, forbid absolutely to change them; neither may they admit alteration against the will of such a law maker. Albeit, therefore, we do not find any cause why of right there should be necessarily an immutable form set down in Holy Scripture; nevertheless, if indeed there have been at any time a Church polity so set down, the change whereof the sacred Scripture doth forbid, surely for men to alter those laws which God for perpetuity hath established were presumption most intolerable. To prove therefore that the will of Christ was to establish laws so permanent and immutable that in any sort to alter them cannot but highly offend God, thus they reason: First, if Moses being but a servant in the house of God did therein establish laws of government for perpetuity, laws which they that were of the household might not alter, shall we admit into our thoughts that the Son of God hath in providing for this His household declared Himself less faithful than Moses? Moses delivering unto the Jews such laws as were durable, if those be changeable which Christ hath delivered unto us, we are not able to avoid it, but (that which to think were heinous impiety) we of necessity must confess even the Son of God himself to have been less faithful than Moses. Which argument shall need no touchstone to try it by, but some other of the like making. Moses erected in the wilderness a tabernacle, which was movable from place to place; Solomon a sumptuous and stately temple, which was not movable: therefore Solomon was faithfuller than Moses, which no man endued with reason will think. And yet by this reason it doth plainly follow. He that will see how faithful the one or the other was, must compare the things which they both did unto the charge which God gave each of them. The Apostle in making comparison between our Saviour and Moses, attributeth faithfulness unto both, and maketh this difference between them: Moses in, but Christ over, the house of God; Moses in that house which was his by charge and commission, *thought to govern it*, yet to govern it as a servant; but Christ

over this house, as being His own entire possession. Our Lord and Saviour doth make protestation, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest Me." Faithful therefore He was, and concealed not any part of His Father's will. But did any part of that will require the immutability of laws concerning Church polity? They answer, yea. For else God should less favour us than the Jews. God would not have their Churches guided by any laws but His own. And seeing this did so continue even till Christ; now to ease God of that care, or rather to deprive the Church of His patronage, what reason have we? Surely none to derogate anything from the ancient love which God hath borne to His Church. An heathen philosopher there is, who considering how many things beasts have which men have not, how naked in comparison of them, how impotent, and how much less able we are to shift for ourselves a long time after we enter into this world, repiningly concluded hereupon, that Nature being a careful mother for them, is towards us a hard-hearted stepdame. No, we may not measure the affection of our gracious God towards His by such differences. For even herein shineth His wisdom, that though the ways of His providence be many, yet the end which He bringeth all at the length unto is one and the selfsame. But if such kind of reasoning were good, might we not even as directly conclude the very same concerning laws of secular regiment? Their own words are these: "In the ancient Church of the Jews, God did command, and Moses commit unto writing, all things pertinent as well to the civil as to the ecclesiastical state." God gave them laws of civil regiment, and would not permit their common-weal to be governed by any other laws than His own. Doth God less regard our temporal estate in this world, or provide for it worse than for theirs? To us notwithstanding He hath not as to them delivered any particular form of temporal regiment, unless perhaps we think, as some do, that the grafting of the Gentiles and their incorporating into Israel doth import that we ought to be subject unto the rites and laws of their whole polity. We see then how weak such disputes are, and how small they make to this purpose. That Christ did not mean to set down particular positive laws for all things in such sort as *Moses did*, the very different manner of delivering the laws of *Moses* and the laws of Christ doth plainly show. *Moses*

had commandment to gather the ordinances of God together distinctly, and orderly to set them down according unto their several kinds, for each public duty and office the laws that belong thereto, as appeareth in the books themselves written of purpose for that end. Contrariwise the laws of Christ we find rather mentioned by occasion in the writings of the apostles, than any solemn thing directly written to comprehend them in legal sort. Again the positive laws which Moses gave, they were given for the greatest part with restraint to the land of Jewry; behold, saith Moses, "I have taught you ordinances and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do even so within the land whither ye go to possess it." Which laws and ordinances positive he plainly distinguisheth afterward from the laws of the two tables which were moral: "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only a voice. Then He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to do, the ten commandments, and wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the Lord commanded me that same time, that I should teach you ordinances and laws which ye should observe in the land whither ye go to possess it." The same difference is again set down in the next chapter following. For rehearsal being made of the ten commandments, it followeth immediately; "These words the Lord spake unto all your multitude in the mount out of the midst of the fire, the cloud and the darkness, with a great voice, and added no more, and wrote them upon two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." But concerning other laws, the people give their consent to receive them at the hands of Moses: "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God saith, and declare thou unto us all that the Lord our God saith unto thee, and we will hear it and do it." The people's alacrity herein God highly commendeth with most effectual and hearty speech: "I have heard the voice of the words of this people, they have spoken well. O that there were such an heart in them to fear Me, and to keep all My commandments always, that it might go well with them, and with their children for ever! Go say unto them, Return you to your tents; but stand thou here with Me, and I will tell thee all the commandments and the ordinances and the laws which thou shalt teach them, that *they may do them* in the land which I have given them to

possess." From this later kind the former are plainly distinguished in many things. They were not both at one time delivered, neither both after one sort, nor to one end. The former uttered by the voice of God himself in the hearing of six hundred thousand men; the former written with the finger of God; the former termed by the name of a covenant; the former given to be kept without either mention of time how long, or of place where. On the other side, the later given after, and neither written by God himself, nor given unto the whole multitude immediately from God, but unto Moses, and from him to them both by word and writing; the later termed ceremonies, judgments, ordinances, but nowhere covenants; finally, the observation of the later restrained unto the land where God would establish them to inhabit. The laws positive are not framed without regard had to the place and persons for the which they are made. If, therefore, Almighty God in framing their laws had an eye unto the nature of that people, and to the country where they were to dwell; if these peculiar and proper considerations were respected in the making of their laws, and must be also regarded in the positive laws of all other nations besides; then seeing that nations are not all alike, surely the giving of one kind of positive laws unto one only people, without any liberty to alter them, is but a slender proof that, therefore, one kind should in like sort be given to serve everlastingly for all. But that which most of all maketh for the clearing of this point is that the Jews who had laws so particularly determining and so fully instructing them in all affairs what to do, were notwithstanding continually inured with causes exorbitant, and such as their laws had not provided for. And in this point much more is granted us than we ask, namely, that for one thing which we have left to the order of the Church, they had twenty which were undecided by the express word of God; and that as their ceremonies and sacraments were multiplied above ours, even so grew the number of those cases which were not determined by any express word. So that if we may devise one law, they by this reason might devise twenty; and if their devising so many were not forbidden, shall their example prove us forbidden to devise as much as one law for the ordering of the Church? *We might not devise no not one, if their example did prove that our Saviour hath utterly forbidden all*

alteration of His laws, inasmuch as there can be no law devised, but needs it must either take away from His, or add thereunto more or less, and so make some kind of alteration. But of this, so large a grant we are content not to take advantage. Men are oftentimes in a sudden passion more liberal than they would be if they had leisure to take advice. And, therefore, so bountiful words, of course, and frank speeches we are contented to let pass without turning them to advantage with too much rigour. It may be they had rather be listened unto, when they commend the kings of Israel which attempted nothing in the government of the Church without the express word of God; and when they urge that God left nothing in His word undescribed, whether it concerned the worship of God or outward polity, nothing unset down, and, therefore, charged them strictly to keep themselves unto that, without any alteration. Howbeit, seeing it cannot be denied, but that many things there did belong unto the course of their public affairs, wherein they had no express word at all to show precisely what they should do; the difference between their condition and ours in these cases will bring some light unto the truth of this present controversy. Before the fact of the son of Shelomith, there was no law which did appoint any certain punishment for blasphemers. That wretched creature being, therefore, deprehended in that impiety, was held in ward, till the mind of the Lord were known concerning his case. The like practice is also mentioned upon occasion of a breach of the Sabbath day. They find a poor silly creature gathering sticks in the wilderness, they bring him unto Moses, and Aaron and all the congregation, they lay him in hold, because it was not declared what should be done with him, till God had said unto Moses, "This man shall die the death." The law required to keep the Sabbath day; but for the breach of the Sabbath what punishment should be inflicted it did not appoint. Such occasions as these are rare. And for such things as do fall scarce once in many ages of men, it did suffice to take such order as was requisite when they fell. But if the case were such as being not already determined by law, were notwithstanding likely oftentimes to come into question, it gave occasion of adding laws that were not before. Thus it fell out in the case of those men polluted, and of the daughters of Zelophehad; whose causes Moses having

brought before the Lord, received laws to serve for the like in time to come. The Jews to this end had the oracle of God, they had the Prophets. And by such means God himself instructed them from heaven what to do in all things that did greatly concern their state, and were not already set down in the law. Shall we then hereupon argue even against our own experience and knowledge? Shall we seek to persuade men, that of necessity it is with us as it was with them, that because God is ours in all respects as much as theirs, therefore, either no such way of direction hath been at any time, or, if it have been, it doth still continue in the Church, or if the same do not continue, that yet it must be at the least supplied by some such mean as pleaseth us to account of equal force? A more dutiful and religious way for us were to admire the wisdom of God, which shineth in the beautiful variety of all things; but most in the manifold and yet harmonious dissimilitude of those ways, whereby His Church upon earth is guided from age to age throughout all generations of men. The Jews were necessarily to continue till the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the gathering of nations unto Him. So much the promise made unto Abraham did import. So much the prophecy of Jacob at the hour of his death did foreshow. Upon the safety, therefore, of their very outward state and condition for so long, the after good of the whole world, and the salvation of all did depend. Unto their so long safety, for two things it was necessary to provide, namely, the preservation of their state against foreign resistance, and the continuance of their peace within themselves. Touching the one, as they received the promise of God to be the rock of their defence, against which who so did violently rush, should but bruise and batter themselves; so likewise they had His commandment in all their affairs that way, to seek direction and counsel from Him. Men's consultations are always perilous. And it falleth out many times that, after long deliberation, those things are by their wit even resolved on, which by trial are found most opposite to public safety. It is no impossible thing for states, be they never so well established, yet by oversight in some one act or treaty between them and their potent opposites, utterly to cast away themselves for ever. *Wherefore*, least it should so fall out to them, upon whom so much did depend, they were not permitted to enter

into war, nor conclude any league of peace, nor to wade through any act of moment between them and foreign states, unless the oracle of God or His prophets were first consulted with. And lest domestical disturbance should waste them within themselves, because there was nothing unto this purpose more effectual, then if the authority of their laws and governors were such, as none might presume to take exception against it, or to show disobedience unto it, without incurring the hatred and detestation of all men that had any spark of the fear of God ; therefore, He gave them even their positive laws from heaven, and as oft as occasion required, chose in like sort rulers also to lead and govern them. Notwithstanding some desperately impious there were which adventured to try what harm it could bring upon them, if they did attempt to be authors of confusion, and to resist both governors and laws. Against such monsters God maintained His own by fearful execution of extraordinary judgment upon them. By which means it came to pass, that although they were a people infested and mightily hated of all others throughout the world, although by nature hard-hearted, querulous, wrathful, and impatient of rest and quietness, yet was there nothing of force either one way or other to work the ruin and subversion of their state, till the time before-mentioned was expired. Thus we see that there was not no cause of dissimilitude in these things, between that one only people before Christ, and the kingdoms of the world since. And whereas it is further alleged, that albeit in "civil matters and things pertaining to this present life, God hath used a greater particularity with them than amongst us, framing laws according to the quality of that people and country ; yet the leaving of us at greater liberty in things civil, is so far from proving the like liberty in things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, that it rather proves a straiter bond. For even as when the Lord would have His favour more appear by temporal blessings of this life towards the people under the law than towards us, He gave also politic laws most exactly, whereby they might both most easily come into, and most steadfastly remain in possession of, those earthly benefits : even so at this time, wherein He would not have His favour so much esteemed by those outward commodities, it is required, that as His care in prescribing laws for that pur-

pose hath somewhat fallen, in leaving them to men's consultations which may be deceived ; so His care for conduct and government of the life to come, should (if it were possible) rise, in leaving less to the order of men than in times past." These are but weak and feeble disputes for the inference of that conclusion which is intended. For saving only in such consideration as hath been showed, there is no cause wherefore we should think God more desirous to manifest His favour by temporal blessings towards them, than towards us. Godliness had unto them, and it hath also unto us, the promises both of this life and the life to come. That the care of God hath fallen in earthly things, and therefore should rise as much in heavenly ; that more is left unto men's consultations in the one, and therefore less must be granted in the other ; that God having used a greater particularity with them than with us for matters pertaining unto this life is to make us amends by the more exact delivery of laws for government of the life to come ; these are proportions, whereof if there be any rule, we must plainly confess that which truth is, we know it not. God which spake unto them by His prophets hath unto us by His only begotten Son ; those mysteries of grace and salvation which were but darkly disclosed unto them have unto us more clearly shined. Such differences between them and us the apostles of Christ have well acquainteth us withal. But as for matter belonging to the outward conduct or government of the Church ; seeing that even in sense it is manifest that our Lord and Saviour hath not by positive laws descended so far into particularities with us, as Moses with them ; neither doth by extraordinary means, oracles, and prophets, direct us, as them He did, in those things which rising daily by new occasions are of necessity to be provided for ; doth it not hereupon rather follow that although not to them, yet to us there should be freedom and liberty granted to make laws ? Yea, but the Apostle St. Paul doth fearfully charge Timothy, "Even in the sight of God who quickeneth all, and of Christ Jesus who witnessed that famous confession before Pontius Pilate, to keep what was commanded him safe and sound till the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ." This doth exclude all liberty of *changing* the laws of Christ, whether by abrogation or *addition*, or howsoever. For in Timothy the whole Church of Christ receiveth charge concerning her duty. And that

charge is to keep the Apostle's commandment : and his commandment did contain the laws that concerned Church government : and those laws he straightly requireth to be observed without breach or blame till the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Scripture we grant every one man's lesson to be the common instruction of all men, so far forth as their cases are like, and that religiously to keep the Apostle's commandments in whatsoever they may concern us we all stand bound. But touching that commandment which Timothy was charged with, we swerve undoubtedly from the Apostle's precise meaning, if we extend it so largely, that the arms thereof shall reach unto all things which were commanded him by the Apostle. The very words themselves do restrain themselves unto some one special commandment among many. And therefore it is not said, "Keep the ordinances, laws and constitutions which thou hast received," but τὸν ἐντολὴν "that great commandment which doth principally concern thee and thy calling ;" that commandment which Christ did so often inculcate unto Peter ; that commandment unto the careful discharge whereof they of Ephesus are exhorted, "attend to yourselves and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased by his own blood ; finally that commandment which unto the same Timothy is by the same Apostle even in the same form and manner afterwards again urged, "I charge thee in the sight of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which will judge the quick and dead at His appearance, and in His kingdom preach the word of God." When Timothy was instituted in that office, then was the credit and trust of this duty committed unto his faithful care. The doctrine of the Gospel was then given him as the precious talent or treasure of Jesus Christ ; then received he for performance of this duty the special gift of the Holy Ghost. To keep this commandment immaculate and blameless was to teach the Gospel of Christ without mixture of corrupt and unsound doctrine, such as a number did even in those times intermingle with the mysteries of Christian belief. Till the appearance of Christ to keep it so doth not import the time wherein it should be kept, but rather the time whereunto the final reward for keeping it was reserved ; according to that of St. Paul concerning himself. "I have kept the faith ; for the residue there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous

Judge, shall in that day render unto me." If they that labour in this harvest should respect but the present fruit of their painful travel, a poor encouragement it were unto them to continue therein all the days of their life. But their reward is great in heaven; the crown of righteousness which shall be given them in that day is honourable. The fruit of their industry then shall they reap with full contentment and satisfaction, but not till then. Wherein the greatness of their reward is abundantly sufficient to countervail the tediousness of their expectation. Wherefore till then they that are in labour must rest in hope. O Timothy, keep that which is committed unto thy charge, that great commandment which thou hath received keep till the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. In which sense, although we judge the Apostle's words to have been uttered, yet hereunto we do not require them to yield, that think any other construction more sound. If therefore it be rejected, and theirs esteemed more probable which hold that the last words do import perpetual observation of the Apostle's commandment imposed necessarily for ever upon the militant Church of Christ; let them withal consider that then His commandment cannot so largely be taken, to comprehend whatsoever the Apostle did command Timothy. For themselves do not all bind the Church unto some things whereof Timothy received charge, as namely unto that precept concerning the choice of widows. So as they cannot hereby maintain that all things positively commanded concerning the affairs of the Church, were commanded for perpetuity—and we do not deny that certain things were commanded to be, though positive, yet perpetual in the Church—they should not therefore urge against us places that seem to forbid change, but rather such as set down some measure of alteration, which measure, if we have exceeded, then might they therewith charge us justly; whereas now they themselves both granting, and also using liberty to change, cannot in reason dispute absolutely against all change. Christ delivered no inconvenient or unmeet laws. Sundry of ours they hold inconvenient. Therefore such laws they cannot possibly hold to be Christ's. Being not His, they must of necessity grant them added unto His. Yet certain of those very laws so added, *they themselves* do not judge unlawful; as they plainly *confess*, both in matter of prescript attire, and of rites

appertaining to burial. Their own protestations are, that they plead against the inconvenience, not the unlawfulness, of popish apparel; and against the inconvenience, not the unlawfulness, of ceremonies in burial. Therefore they hold it a thing not unlawful to add to the laws of Jesus Christ; and so consequently they yield, that no law of Christ forbiddeth addition unto Church laws. The judgment of Calvin being alleged against them, to whom of all men they attribute most, whereas, his words be plain, that for ceremonies and external discipline the Church hath power to make laws, the answer which hereunto they make is, that indefinitely the speech is true, and that so it was meant by him, namely, that some things belonging unto external discipline and ceremonies are in the power and arbitrament of the Church; but neither was it meant, neither is it true generally, that all external discipline, and all ceremonies, are left to the order of the Church, inasmuch as the Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord are ceremonies which yet the Church may not therefore abrogate. Again, excommunication is a part of external discipline which might also be cast away, if all external discipline were arbitrary and in the choice of the Church. By which their answer it doth appear, that touching the names of ceremony and external discipline, they gladly would have us so understood, as if we did herein contain a great deal more than we do. The fault which we find with them is, that they overmuch abridge the Church of her power in these things. Whereupon they recharge us, as if in these things we gave the Church a liberty which hath no limits or bounds; as if all things which the name of discipline containeth, were at the Church's free choice, so that we might either have Church governors and government or want them, either retain or reject Church censures as we list. They wonder at us, as at men which think it so indifferent what the Church doth in matters of ceremonies, that it may be feared lest we judge the very Sacraments themselves to be held at the Church's pleasure. No, the name of ceremonies we do not use in so large a meaning as to bring Sacraments within the compass and reach thereof; although things belonging unto the outward form and seemly administration of them, are contained in that name, even as we use it. For the name of ceremonies we use as *they themselves do*, when they speak after this sort: "The

doctrine and discipline of the Church, as the weightiest things ought especially to be looked unto; but the ceremonies also, as mint and cummin, ought not to be neglected." Besides, in the matter of external discipline or regiment in itself, we do not deny but there are some things whereto the Church is bound till the world's end. So as the question is only how far the bounds of the Church's liberty do reach. We hold that the power which the Church hath lawfully to make laws and orders for itself, doth extend unto sundry things of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and such other matters, whereto their opinion is, that the Church's authority and power doth not reach. Whereas, therefore, in disputing against us about this point, they take their compass a great deal wider than the truth of things can afford, producing reasons and arguments by way of generality, to prove that Christ hath set down all things belonging anyway unto the form of ordering His Church, and hath absolutely forbidden change by addition or diminution great or small (for so their manner of disputing is) we are constrained to make our defence, by showing that Christ hath not deprived His Church so far of all liberty in making orders and laws for itself, and that they themselves do not think He hath so done. For are they able to show that all particular customs, rites, and orders of reformed Churches have been appointed by Christ himself? No, they grant that in matter of circumstance they alter that which they have received; but in things of substance they keep the laws of Christ without change. If we say the same in our own behalf (which surely we may do with a great deal more truth), then must they cancel all that hath been before alleged, and begin to inquire afresh, whether we retain the laws that Christ hath delivered concerning matters of substance, yea or no. For our constant persuasion in this point is as theirs, that we have nowhere altered the laws of Christ further than in such particularities only as have the nature of things changeable according to the difference of times, places, persons, and other the like circumstances. Christ hath commanded prayers to be made, sacraments to be ministered, His Church to be carefully taught and guided. Concerning every of these somewhat Christ hath commanded which must be *kept till the world's end*. On the contrary side in every of *them* somewhat there may be added, as the Church shall judge it expedient. So that if they will speak to purpose,

all which hitherto hath been disputed of they must give over, and stand upon such particulars only as they can show we have either added or abrogated otherwise than we ought in the matter of Church polity. Whatsoever Christ hath commanded for ever to be kept in His Church, the same we take not upon us to abrogate ; and whatsoever our laws have thereunto added besides, of such quality we hope it is, as no law of Christ doth anywhere condemn. Wherefore that all may be laid together, and gathered into a narrow room :

1. First so far forth as the Church is the mystical body of Christ and His invisible spouse, it needeth no external polity. That very part of the law divine which teacheth faith and works of righteousness, is itself alone sufficient for the Church of God in that respect. But as the Church is a visible society and body politic, laws of polity it cannot want.
2. Whereas, therefore, it cometh in the second place to be inquired, what laws are fittest and best for the Church ; they who first embraced that rigorous and strict opinion, which depriveth the Church of liberty to make any kind of law for herself, inclined (as it should seem) thereunto, for that they imagined all things, which the Church doth without commandment of Holy Scripture, subject to that reproof which the Scripture itself useth in certain cases, when divine authority ought alone to be followed. Hereupon they thought it enough for the cancelling of any kind of order whatsoever to say, "The word of God teacheth it not ; it is a device of the brain of man. Away with it, therefore, out of the Church !" St. Augustine was of another mind, who, speaking of fasts on the Sunday, saith, "That he which would choose out that day to fast on should give thereby no small offence to the Church of God, which had received a contrary custom ; for in these things whereof the Scripture appointeth no certainty, the use of the people of God, or the ordinances of our Fathers, must serve for a law, in which case, if we will dispute and condemn one sort by another's custom, it will be but matter of endless contention, where, forasmuch as the labour of reasoning shall hardly beat into men's heads any certain or necessary truth, surely it standeth us upon to take heed lest with the tempest of strife the brightness of charity and love be darkened." If all things must be commanded of God *which may be practised of His Church*, I would know what

commandment the Gileadites had to erect that altar which is spoken of in the Book of Joshua. Did not congruity of reason induce them thereunto, and suffice for defence of their fact? I would know what commandment the women of Israel had yearly to mourn and lament in the memory of Jephtha's daughter; what commandment the Jews had to celebrate their feast of Dedication, never spoken of in the law, yet solemnized even by our Saviour himself; what commandment, finally, they had for the ceremony of odours used about the bodies of the dead, after which custom notwithstanding (since it was their custom) our Lord was contented that His own most precious body should be entombed. Wherefore, to reject all orders of the Church which men have established is to think worse of the laws of men in this respect than either the judgment of wise men alloweth or the law of God itself will bear. Howbeit they which had once taken upon them to condemn all things done in the Church, and not commanded of God to be done, saw it was necessary for them (continuing in defence of this their opinion) to hold that needs there must be in Scripture set down a complete particular form of Church polity—a form prescribing how all the affairs of the Church must be ordered, a form in no respect lawful to be altered by mortal men; for reformation of which oversight and error in them, there were that thought it a part of Christian love and charity to instruct them better, and to open unto them the difference between matters of perpetual necessity to all men's salvation and matters of ecclesiastical polity: the one both fully and plainly taught in Holy Scripture, the other not necessary to be in such sort there prescribed; the one not capable of any diminution or augmentation at all by men, the other apt to admit both. Hereupon the authors of the former opinion were presently seconded by other wittier and better learned, who, being loth that the form of Church polity which they sought to bring in should be otherwise than in the highest degree accounted of, took first an exception against the difference between Church polity and matters of necessity to salvation; secondly, against the restraint of Scripture, which they say receiveth injury at our hands when we teach that it teacheth not as well matters of polity as of faith and salvation. 3. *Constrained hereby we have been, therefore, both to maintain that distinction as a thing not only true in itself, but by*

them likewise so acknowledged, though unawares. 4. And to make manifest that from Scripture we offer not to derogate the least thing that truth thereunto doth claim, inasmuch as by us it is willingly confessed that the Scripture of God is a storehouse abounding with inestimable treasures of wisdom and knowledge in many kinds, over and above things in this one kind barely necessary; yea, even that matters of ecclesiastical polity are not therein omitted, but taught also, albeit not so taught as those other things before mentioned. For so perfectly are those things taught that nothing ever can need to be added, nothing ever cease to be necessary. These on the contrary side, as being of a far other nature and quality, not so strictly nor everlastingly commanded in Scripture, but that unto the complete form of Church polity much may be requisite which the Scripture teacheth not, and much which it hath taught become un-requisite, sometime because we need not use it, sometime also because we cannot. In which respect, for mine own part, although I see that certain reformed Churches, the Scottish especially and French, have not that which best agreeth with the sacred Scripture—I mean the government that is by bishops—inasmuch as both those Churches are fallen under a different kind of regiment, which to remedy it is for the one altogether too late, and too soon for the other during their present affliction and trouble; this their defect and imperfection I had rather lament in such a case than exagitate, considering that men oftentimes, without any fault of their own, may be driven to want that kind of polity or regiment which is best, and to content themselves with that which either the irremediable error of former times or the necessity of the present hath cast upon them. 5. Now because that position first mentioned, which holdeth it necessary that all things which the Church may lawfully do in her own regiment be commanded in Holy Scripture, hath by the latter defenders thereof been greatly qualified, who, though perceiving it to be over extreme, are notwithstanding loth to acknowledge any oversight therein, and therefore labour what they may to salve it by construction, we have for the more perspicuity delivered what was thereby meant at the first. 6. How injurious a thing it were unto all the Churches of God for men to hold it in that meaning. 7. And how unperfect *their interpretations* are who so much labour to help it

either by dividing commandments of Scripture into two kinds, and so defending that all things must be commanded, if not in special, yet in general precepts. 8. Or by taking it as meant that in case the Church do devise any new order, she ought therein to follow the direction of Scripture only, and not any starlight of man's reason. 9. Both which evasions being cut off, we have in the next place declared after what sort the Church may lawfully frame to herself laws of polity, and in what reckoning such positive laws both are with God and should be with men. 10. Furthermore, because to abridge the liberty of the Church in this behalf it hath been made a thing very odious, that when God himself hath devised some certain laws, and committed them to sacred Scripture, man, by abrogation, addition, or any way, should presume to alter and change them, it was of necessity to be examined whether the authority of God in making, or His care in committing those His laws unto Scripture be sufficient arguments to prove that God doth in no case allow they should suffer any such kind of change. 11. The last refuge for proof that divine laws of Christian Church polity may not be altered, by extinguishment of any old or addition of new in that kind, is partly a marvellous strange discourse, that Christ (unless He would show Himself not so faithful as Moses, or not so wise as Lycurgus and Solon) must needs have set down in Holy Scripture some certain complete and unchangeable form of polity; and partly a coloured show of some evidence, where change of that sort of laws may seem expressly forbidden, although in truth nothing less be done. I might have added hereunto their more familiar and popular disputes; as, the Church is a city, yea, the city of the great King, and the life of a city is polity: the Church is the house of the living God, and what house can there be, without some order for the government of it? In the royal house of a prince there must be officers for government, such as not any servant in the house but the prince, whose the house is, shall judge convenient. So the house of God must have orders for the government of it, such as not any of the household, but God himself hath appointed. It cannot stand with the love and wisdom of God to leave such order untaken as is necessary for the due government of His Church. The numbers, degrees, orders, and attire of Solomon's servants did show his wisdom: therefore He which is

greater than Solomon, hath not failed to leave in His house such orders for government thereof, as may serve to be as a looking-glass for His providence, care, and wisdom to be seen in. That little spark of the light of Nature which remaineth in us, may serve us for the affairs of this life. But as in all other matters concerning the kingdom of heaven, so principally in this which concerneth the very government of that kingdom, needful it is we should be taught of God. As long as men are persuaded of any order that is only of men, they presume of their own understanding, and they think to devise another not only as good, but better than that which they have received. By severity of punishment, this presumption and curiosity may be restrained. But that cannot work such cheerful obedience as is yielded, where the conscience hath respect to God as the author of laws and orders. This was it which countenanced the laws of Moses, made concerning outward polity for the administration of holy things. The like some law-givers of the heathens did pretend, but falsely; yet wisely discerning the use of this persuasion. For the better obedience' sake therefore it was expedient that God should be author of the polity of His Church. But to what issue doth all this come? A man would think that they which hold out with such discourses, were of nothing more fully persuaded than of this, that the Scripture hath set down a complete form of Church polity, universal, perpetual, altogether unchangeable. For so it would follow, if the premises were sound and strong to such effect as is pretended. Notwithstanding they which have thus formally maintained argument in defence of the first oversight, are by the very evidence of truth themselves constrained to make this in effect their conclusion, that the Scripture of God hath many things concerning Church polity; that of those many, some are of greater weight, some of less; that which hath been urged as touching immutability of laws, it extendeth in truth no further than only to laws wherein things of greater moment are prescribed. Now those things of greater moment, what are they? Forsooth, "doctors, pastors, lay elders, elderships compounded of these three; synods consisting of many elderships; deacons, women-church-servants or widows' free consent of the people unto actions of greatest moment, after they be by churches or synods orderly resolved." All this form of polity (if yet we may term that a form of building, when

men have laid a few rafters together, and those not all of the soundest neither) but howsoever, all this form they conclude is prescribed in such sort, that to add to it anything as of like importance (for so I think they mean), or to abrogate of it anything at all, is unlawful. In which resolution if they will firmly and constantly persist, I see not but that concerning the points which hitherto have been disputed of they must agree that they have molested the Church with needless opposition; and henceforward, as we said before, betake themselves wholly unto the trial of particulars, whether every of those things which they esteem as principal, be either so esteemed of, or at all established for perpetuity in Holy Scripture; and whether any particular thing in our Church polity be received other than the Scripture alloweth of, either in greater things or in smaller. The matters wherein Church polity is conversant are the public religious duties of the Church, as the administration of the word and sacraments, prayers, spiritual censures, and the like. To these the Church standeth always bound. Laws of polity are laws which appoint in what manner these duties shall be performed. In performance whereof because all that are of the Church cannot jointly and equally work, the first thing in polity required, is a difference of persons in the Church, without which difference those functions cannot in orderly sort be executed. Hereupon we hold, that God's clergy are a state which hath been and will be, as long as there is a Church upon earth, necessary by the plain word of God himself, a state whereunto the rest of God's people must be subject as touching things that appertain to their souls' health. For where polity is, it cannot but appoint some to be leaders of others, and some to be led by others. "If the blind lead the blind, they both perish." It is with the clergy, if their persons be respected, even as it is with other men; their quality many times far beneath that, which the dignity of their place requireth. Howbeit, according to the order of polity, they being the "lights of the world," others (though better and wiser) must that way be subject unto them. Again, forasmuch as where the clergy are any great multitude, order doth necessarily require that by degrees they be distinguished: we hold there have ever been and ever ought to be in such case, at leastwise two sorts of ecclesiastical persons, the one subordinate unto the other; as to the apostles in the beginning, and to the bishops

always since, we find plainly both in Scripture and in all ecclesiastical records, other ministers of the word and sacraments have been. Moreover it cannot enter into any man's conceit to think it lawful, that every man which listeth should take upon him charge in the Church: and therefore a solemn admittance is of such necessity, that without it there can be no Church polity. A number of particularities there are, which make for the more convenient being of these principal and perpetual parts in ecclesiastical polity, but yet are not of such constant use and necessity in God's Church. Of this kind are times and places appointed for the exercise of religion, specialties belonging to the public solemnity of the word, the sacraments and prayer; the enlargement or abridgment of functions ministerial depending upon those two principles before mentioned; to conclude, even whatsoever doth by way of formality and circumstance concern any public action of the Church. Now although that which the Scripture hath of things in the former kind be for ever permanent, yet in the latter both much of that which the Scripture teacheth is not always needful, and much the Church of God shall always need which the Scripture teacheth not. So as the form of polity by them set down for perpetuity is three ways faulty—faulty in omitting some things, which in Scripture are of that nature, as, namely, the difference that ought to be of pastors when they grow to any great multitude; faulty in requiring doctors, deacons, widows, and such like, as things of perpetual necessity by the law of God, which in truth are nothing less; faulty also in urging some things by Scripture immutable, as their lay elders, which the Scripture neither maketh immutable nor at all teacheth, for anything either we can as yet find, or they have hitherto been able to prove. But hereof more in the books that follow. As for those marvellous discourses, whereby they adventure to argue that God must needs have done the thing which they imagine was to be done, I must confess I have often wondered at their exceeding boldness herein. When the question is whether God have delivered in Scripture (as they affirm He hath) a complete particular immutable form of Church polity, why take they that other both presumptuous and superfluous labour to prove He should have done it, there being no way in this case to prove the deed of God, saving only by producing that evidence wherein He hath done it? But if

there be no such thing apparent upon record, they do as if one should demand a legacy by force and virtue of some written testament, wherein there being no such thing specified he pleadeth that there it must needs be, and bringeth arguments from the love or goodwill which always the testator bore him, imagining that these or the like proofs will convict a testament to have that in it, which other men can nowhere by reading find. In matters which concern the actions of God, the most dutiful way on our part is to search what God hath done, and with meekness to admire that, rather than to dispute what He in congruity of reason ought to do. The ways which He hath whereby to do all things for the greatest good of His Church are more in number than we can search, other in nature than that we should presume to determine which of many should be the fittest for Him to choose, till such time as we see He hath chosen of many some one; which one we then may boldly conclude to be the fittest because He hath taken it before the rest. When we do otherwise surely we exceed our bounds, who and where we are we forget, and, therefore, needful it is that our pride in such cases be controlled, and our disputes beaten back with those demands of the blessed Apostle, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who was His counsellor?"

The Fourth Book.

1. How great use ceremonies have in the Church.
2. The first thing they blame in the kind of our ceremonies is, that we have not in them ancient apostolical simplicity, but a greater pomp and stateliness.
3. The second, that so many of them are the same which the Church of Rome useth, and the reasons which they bring to prove them for that cause blameworthy.
4. How, when they go about to expound what Popish ceremonies they mean, they contradict their own arguments against Popish ceremonies.
5. An answer to the argument whereby they would prove that since we allow the customs of our fathers to be followed, we, therefore, may not allow such customs as the Church of Rome hath, because we cannot account of them which are in that Church as of our fathers.

6. To their allegation that the course of God's own wisdom doth make against our conformity with the Church of Rome in such things.
7. To the example of the eldest Church which they bring for the same purpose.
8. That it is not our best polity (as they pretend it is) for establishment of sound religion to have in these things no agreement with the Church of Rome being unsound.
9. That neither the Papists upbraiding us as furnished out of their store, nor any hope which in that respect they are said to conceive, doth make any more against our ceremonies than the former allegations have done.
10. The grief which they say godly brethren conceive at such ceremonies as we have common with the Church of Rome.
11. The third thing for which they reprove a great part of our ceremonies is, for that as we have them from the Church of Rome so that Church had them from the Jews.
12. The fourth, for that sundry of them have been (they say) abused unto idolatry, and are by that mean become scandalous.
13. The fifth, for that we retain them still notwithstanding the example of certain churches reformed before us, which have east them out.
14. A declaration of the proceedings of the Church of England for the establishment of things as they are,

SUCH was the ancient simplicity and softness of spirit which sometimes prevailed in the world, that they whose words were even as oracles amongst men seemed evermore loath to give sentence against anything publicly received in the Church of God, except it were wonderful apparently evil; for that they did not so much incline to that severity, which delighteth to reprove the least things it seeth amiss, as to that charity which is unwilling to behold anything that duty bindeth it to reprove. The state of this present age, wherein zeal hath drowned charity, and skill meekness, will not now suffer any man to marvel whatsoever he shall hear reprov'd by whomsoever. Those rites and ceremonies of the Church therefore, which are the selfsame now that they were when holy and virtuous men maintained them against profane and deriding adversaries, her own children have at this day in derision. Whether justly or no it shall then appear, when all things are heard which they have to allege against the outward received orders of this Church. Which inasmuch as themselves do compare unto mint and cummin, granting them to be no part of those things which in the matter of polity are weightier, we hope that for small things their strife will neither be earnest nor long. The sifting of that which is objected against the orders of the Church in particular doth not belong unto this place. Here we are to

discuss only those general exceptions which have been taken at any time against them. First, therefore, to the end that their nature and use whereunto they serve may plainly appear, and so afterwards their quality the better be discerned; we are to note that in every grand or main public duty which God requireth at the hands of His Church, there is, besides that matter and form wherein the essence thereof consisteth, a certain outward fashion whereby the same is in decent sort administered. The substance of all religious actions is delivered from God himself in few words. For example' sake in the sacraments, "Unto the element let the word be added, and they both do make a sacrament," saith St. Augustine. Baptism is given by the element of water, and that prescript form of words which the Church of Christ doth use; the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is administered in the elements of bread and wine, if those mystical words be added thereunto. But the due and decent form of administering those holy sacraments doth require a great deal more. The end which is aimed at in setting down the outward form of all religious actions, is the edification of the Church. Now men are edified when either their understanding is taught somewhat whereof in such actions it behoveth all men to consider; or when their hearts are moved with any affection suitable thereunto, when their minds are in any sort stirred up unto that reverence, devotion, attention, and due regard which in those cases seemeth requisite. Because, therefore, unto this purpose not only speech but sundry sensible means besides have always been thought necessary, and especially those means which being object to the eye, the liveliest and the most apprehensive sense of all other, have in that respect seemed the fittest to make a deep and strong impression; from hence have risen not only a number of prayers, readings, questionings, exhortings, but even of visible signs also, which being used in performance of holy actions are undoubtedly most effectual to open such matter, as men when they know and remember carefully must needs be a great deal the better informed to what effect such duties serve. We must not think but that there is some ground of reason even in Nature, whereby it cometh to pass that no nation under heaven either doth or ever did suffer *public actions* which are of weight, whether they be civil and temporal, or else spiritual and sacred, to pass without

some visible solemnity, the very strangeness whereof, and difference from that which is common, doth cause popular eyes to observe and to mark the same. Words, both because they are common and do not so strongly move the fancy of man, are for the most part but slightly heard, and therefore with singular wisdom it hath been provided that the deeds of men which are made in the presence of witnesses, should pass not only with words but also with certain sensible actions, the memory whereof is far more easy and durable than the memory of speech can be. The things which so long experience of all ages hath confirmed and made profitable, let not us presume to condemn as follies and toys, because we sometimes know not the cause and reason of them. A wit disposed to scorn whatsoever it doth not conceive, might ask wherefore Abraham should say to his servant, "Put thy hand under my thigh and swear;" was it not sufficient for his servant to show the religion of an oath by naming the Lord God of heaven and earth, unless that strange ceremony were added? In contracts, bargains, and conveyances a man's word is a token sufficient to express his will. "Yet this was the ancient manner in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging to establish all things: a man did pluck off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour, and this was a sure witness in Israel." Amongst the Romans in their making of a bondman free was it not wondered wherefore so great ado should be made? The master to present his slave in some court, to take him by the hand, and not only to say in the hearing of the public magistrate, "I will that this man become free," but after these solemn words uttered, to strike him on the cheek, to turn him round, the hair of his head to be shaved off, the magistrate to touch him thrice with a rod, in the end a cap and a white garment to be given him. To what purpose all this circumstance? Amongst the Hebrews how strange and in outward appearance almost against reason, that he which was minded to make himself a perpetual servant should not only testify so much in the presence of the judge, but for a visible token thereof have also his ear bored through with an awl. It were an infinite labour to prosecute these things so far as they might be exemplified both in civil and religious actions. For in both they have their necessary use and force. "These sensible things which religion hath allowed are resemblances framed ac-

cordova to things spiritually understood, whereunto they serve as a hand to lead and a way to direct." And whereas it may peradventure be objected that to add to religious duties such rites and ceremonies as are significant is to institute new sacraments: sure I am they will not say that Numa Pompilius did ordain a sacrament. A significant ceremony he did ordain, in commanding the priests "to execute the work of their divine service with their hands as far as to the fingers covered, thereby signifying that fidelity must be defended, and that men's right hands are the sacred seat thereof." Again, we are also to put them in mind that themselves do not hold all significant ceremonies for sacraments, inasmuch as imposition of hands they deny to be a sacrament, and yet they give thereunto a forcible signification. For concerning it their words are these: "The party ordained by this ceremony was put in mind of his separation to the work of the Lord, that remembering himself to be taken as it were with the hand of God from amongst others, this might teach him not to account himself now his own, nor to do what himself listeth, but to consider that God hath set him about a work which if he will discharge and accomplish he may at the hands of God assure himself of reward, and if otherwise of revenge." Touching significant ceremonies, some of them are sacraments, some as sacraments only. Sacraments are those which are signs and tokens of some general promised grace, which always really descendeth from God unto the soul that duly receiveth them; other significant tokens are only as sacraments, yet no sacraments. Which is not our distinction but theirs. For concerning the apostles' imposition of hand, these are their own words: *Manuum signum hoc et quasi sacramentum usurparunt*—they used this sign or, as it were, sacrament.

2. Concerning rites and ceremonies, there may be fault, either in the kind or in the number and multitude of them. The first thing blamed about the kind of ours is that in many things we have departed from the ancient simplicity of Christ and His apostles, we have embraced more outward stateliness, we have those orders in the exercise of religion which they who best pleased God and served Him most devoutly never had. For it is out of doubt that the first state of things was best; that in the prime of Christian religion faith was soundest, the Scriptures of God were then

best understood by all men, all parts of godliness did then most abound: and therefore it must needs follow that customs, laws and ordinances devised since are not so good for the Church of Christ, but the best way is to cut off later inventions and to reduce things unto the ancient state wherein at the first they were. Which rule or canon we hold to be either uncertain, or at leastwise insufficient, if not both. For in case it be certain, hard it cannot be for them to show us where we shall find it so exactly set down, that we may say without all controversy, "These were the orders of the apostles' times, these wholly and only, neither fewer, nor more, than these. True it is that many things of this nature be alluded unto, yea many things declared, and many things necessarily collected out of the apostles' writings. But is it necessary that all the orders of the Church which were then in use should be contained in their books? Surely no. For if the tenor of their writings be well observed it shall unto any man easily appear, that no more of them are there touched than were needful to be spoken of sometimes by one occasion and sometimes by another. Will they allow then of any other records besides? Well assured I am they are far enough from acknowledging that the Church ought to keep anything as apostolical, which is not found in the apostles' writings, in what other records soever it be found. And, therefore, whereas St. Augustine affirmeth, that those things which the whole Church of Christ doth hold may well be thought to be apostolical, although they be not found written, this, his judgment, they utterly condemn. I will not here stand in defence of St. Augustine's opinion, which is that such things are indeed apostolical, but yet with this exception: unless the decree of some general council have happily caused them to be received, for of positive laws and orders received throughout the whole Christian world St. Augustine could imagine no other fountain save these two. But to let pass St. Augustine, they who condemn him herein must needs confess it a very uncertain thing what the orders of the Church were in the apostles' times, seeing the Scriptures do not mention them all, and other records thereof besides they utterly reject. So that in tying the Church to the orders of the apostles' times, they tie it to a marvellous uncertain rule, unless they require the observation of no orders but only those which are known to be apostolical

by the apostles' own writings. But then is not this their rule of such efficiency, that we should use it as a touchstone to try the orders of the Church by for ever. Our end ought always to be the same, our ways and means thereunto not so. The glory of God and the good of His Church was the thing which the apostles aimed at, and therefore ought to be the mark whereat we also level. But seeing those rites and orders may be at one time more, which at another are less available unto that purpose, what season is there in these things to urge the state of one only age, as a pattern for all to follow? It is not I am right sure their meaning, that we should now assemble our people to serve God in close and secret meetings, or that common brooks or rivers should be used for places of baptism, or that the Eucharist should be ministered after meat, or that the custom of Church feasting should be renewed, or that all kind of standing provision for the ministry should be utterly taken away, and their estate made again dependent upon the voluntary devotion of men. In these things they easily perceive how unfit that were for the present, which was for the first age convenient enough. The faith, zeal, and godliness of former times is worthily had in honour, but doth this prove that the orders of the Church of Christ must be still the selfsame with theirs, that nothing may be which was not then, or that nothing which then was may lawfully since have ceased? They who recall the Church unto that which was at the first, must necessarily set bounds and limits unto their speeches. If anything have been received repugnant unto that which was first delivered, the first things in this case must stand, the last give place unto them. But where difference is without repugnancy, that which hath been can be no prejudice to that which is. Let the state of the people of God when they were in the house of bondage, and their manner of serving God in a strange land, be compared with that which Canaan and Jerusalem did afford, and who seeth not what huge difference there was between them? In Egypt it may be they were right glad to take some corner of a poor cottage, and there to serve God upon their knees, peradventure covered in dust and straw sometimes. Neither were they therefore the less accepted of God, but He was with them in all their afflictions, and at the length by working their admirable deliverance, did testify that they served Him not in vain. Notwithstanding, in the

very desert they are no sooner possessed of some little thing of their own, but a tabernacle is required at their hands. Being planted in the land of Canaan, and having David to be their king, when the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies, it grieved his religious mind to consider the growth of his own estate and dignity, the affairs of religion continuing still in the former manner: "Behold now I dwell in an house of cedar trees, and the Ark of God remaineth still within curtains." What he did purpose, it was the pleasure of God that Solomon his son should perform, and perform it in manner suitable unto their present, not their ancient estate and condition. For which cause Solomon writeth unto the King of Tyrus: "The house which I build is great and wonderful, for great is our God above all gods." Whereby it clearly appeareth that the orders of the Church of God may be acceptable unto Him, as well being framed suitable to the greatness and dignity of later, as when they keep the reverend simplicity of ancients times. Such dissimilitude therefore between us and the apostles of Christ, in the order of some outward things, is no argument of default.

3. Yea but we have framed ourselves to the customs of the Church of Rome, our orders and ceremonies are Papistical. It is espied that our Church founders were not so careful as in this matter they should have been, but contented themselves with such discipline as they took from the Church of Rome. Their error we ought to reform by abolishing all Popish orders. There must be no communion nor fellowship with Papists, neither in doctrine, ceremonies, nor government. It is not enough that we are divided from the Church of Rome by the single wall of doctrine, retaining as we do part of their ceremonies, and almost their whole government; but government or ceremonies, or whatsoever it be which is Popish, away with it. This is the thing they require in us, the utter relinquishment of all things Popish. Wherein to the end we may answer them according unto their plain direct meaning, and not take advantage of doubtful speech, whereby controversies grow always endless; their main position being this, that nothing should be placed in the Church but what God in His Word hath commanded, they must of necessity hold all for Popish, which the Church of Rome hath over and *besides this*. By Popish orders, ceremonies, and govern-

ment, they must therefore mean in every of these so much, as the Church of Rome hath embraced without commandment of God's Word, so that whatsoever such thing we have if the Church of Rome have it also, it goeth under the name of those things that are Popish, yea, although it be lawful, although agreeable to the word of God. For so they plainly affirm, saying: "Although the forms and ceremonies which they (the Church of Rome) used were not unlawful, and that they contained nothing which is not agreeable to the word of God, yet notwithstanding neither the word of God, nor reason, nor the examples of the eldest Churches both Jewish and Christian, do permit us to use the same forms and ceremonies, being neither commanded of God, neither such as there may not as good as they and rather better be established." The question, therefore, is, whether we may follow the Church of Rome in those orders, rites, and ceremonies, wherein we do not think them blameable, or else ought to devise others, and to have no conformity with them—no, not as much as in these things. In this sense and construction, therefore, as they affirm, so we deny, that whatsoever is Popish we ought to abrogate. Their arguments to prove that generally all Popish orders and ceremonies ought to be clean abolished are in sum these:—First, whereas we allow the judgment of St. Augustine, that touching those things of this kind which are not commanded or forbidden in the Scripture, we are to observe the custom of the people of God, and decree of our forefathers; how can we retain the customs and constitutions of the Papists in such things, who were neither the people of God nor our forefathers? Secondly, although the forms and ceremonies of the Church of Rome were not unlawful, neither did contain anything which is not agreeable to the word of God, yet neither the word of God nor the example of the eldest Churches of God, nor reason do permit us to use the same, they being heretics, and so near about us, and their orders being neither commanded of God, nor yet such but that as good or rather better may be established. It is against the word of God to have conformity with the Church of Rome in such things, as appeareth in that the wisdom of God hath thought it a good way to keep His people from infection of idolatry and *superstition*, by severing them from idolaters in outward *ceremonies*, and therefore hath forbidden them to do things

which are in themselves very lawful to be done. And further, whereas the Lord was careful to sever them by ceremonies from other nations, yet was He not so careful to sever them from any, as from the Egyptians amongst whom they lived, and from those nations which were next neighbours unto them, because from them was the greatest fear of infection. So that following the course which the wisdom of God doth teach, it were more safe for us to conform our indifferent ceremonies to the Turks, which are far off, than to the Papists which are so near. Touching the example of the eldest Churches of God, in one council it was decreed that Christians should not deck their houses with bay leaves and green boughs, because the Pagans did use so to do, and that they should not rest from their labours those days that the Pagans did, that they should not keep the first day of every month as they did. Another council decreed that Christians should not celebrate feasts on the birthdays of the martyrs, because it was the manner of the heathen. O, saith Tertullian, better is the religion of the heathen, for they use no solemnity of the Christians, neither the Lord's-day, neither the Pentecost; and if they knew them they would have nothing to do with them, for they would be afraid lest they should seem Christians; but we are not afraid to be called heathen. The same Tertullian would not have Christians to sit after they had prayed, because the idolaters did so. Whereby it appeareth that both of particular men and of councils, in making or abolishing of ceremonies heed had been taken that the Christians should not be like the idolaters, no not in those things which of themselves are most indifferent to be used or not used. The same conformity is not less opposite unto reason—first, inasmuch as contraries must be cured by their contraries, and therefore Popery being Antichristianity, is not healed but by establishment of orders thereunto opposite. The way to bring a drunken man to sobriety is to carry him as far from excess of drink as may be. To rectify a crooked stick we bend it on the contrary side as far as it was at the first on that side from whence we draw it, and so it cometh in the end to a middle between both, which is perfect straightness. Utter inconformity, therefore, with the Church of Rome in these things is the best and surest policy which the Church can use. While we use *their ceremonies* they take occasion to blaspheme, saying

that our religion cannot stand by itself unless it lean upon the staff of their ceremonies. They hereby conceive great hopes of having the rest of their Popery in the end, which hope causeth them to be more frozen in their wickedness. Neither is it without cause that they have this hope, considering that which Master Bucer noteth upon the eighteenth of St. Matthew, that where these things have been left Popery hath returned; but on the other part, in places which have been cleansed of these things, it hath not yet been seen that it hath had any entrance. None make such clamours for these ceremonies as the Papists, and those whom they suborn, a manifest token how much they triumph and joy in these things. They breed grief of mind in a number that are godly-minded, and have Antichristianity in such detestation that their minds are martyred with the very sight of them in the Church. Such godly brethren we ought not thus to grieve with unprofitable ceremonies; yea, ceremonies wherein there is not only no profit, but also danger of great hurt that may grow to the Church by infection, which Popish ceremonies are means to breed. This in effect is the sum and substance of that which they bring by way of opposition against those orders which we have common with the Church of Rome; these are the reasons wherewith they would prove our ceremonies in that respect worthy of blame.

4. Before we answer unto those things we are to cut off that whereunto they from whom these objections proceed, do oftentimes fly for defence and succour when the force and strength of their arguments are elided. For the ceremonies in use amongst us, being in no other respect retained, saving only for that to retain them is to our seeming good and profitable; yea, so profitable and so good that if we had either simply taken them clean away, or else removed them so as to place in their stead others, we had done worse; the plain and direct way against us herein had been only to prove that all such ceremonies as they require to be abolished are retained by us with the hurt of the Church, or with less benefit than the abolishment of them would bring. But forasmuch as they saw how hardly they should be able to perform this, they took a more compendious way, traducing the ceremonies of our Church under the name of *being Popish*. The cause why this way seemed better unto them was, for that the name of Popery is more odious than

very Paganism amongst divers of the more simple sort, so whatsoever they hear named Popish they presently conceive deep hatred against it, imagining there can be nothing contained in that name, but needs it must be exceeding detestable. The ears of the people they have, therefore, filled with strong clamour: "The Church of England is fraught with Popish ceremonies. They that favour the cause of reformation, maintain nothing but the sincerity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All such as withstand them fight for the laws of his sworn enemy, uphold the filthy relics of Antichrist, and are defenders of that which is Popish." These are the notes wherewith are drawn from the hearts of the multitude so many sighs; with these tunes their minds are exasperated against the lawful guides and governors of their souls; these are the voices that fill them with general discontentment, as though the bosom of that famous Church wherein they live were more noisome than any dungeon. But when the authors of so scandalous incantations are examined and called to account how they can justify such their dealings, when they are urged directly to answer, whether it be lawful for us to use any such ceremonies as the Church of Rome useth, although the same be not commanded in the word of God, being driven to see that the use of some such ceremonies must of necessity be granted lawful, they go about to make us believe that they are just of the same opinion and that they only think such ceremonies are not to be used when they are unprofitable, or when as good or better may be established. Which answer is both idle in regard of us, and also repugnant to themselves. It is in regard of us very vain to make this answer, because they know that what ceremonies we retain common unto the Church of Rome, we therefore retain them, for that we judge them to be profitable, and to be such that others instead of them would be worse. So that when they saw that we ought to abrogate such Romish ceremonies as are unprofitable, or else might have other more profitable in their stead, they trifle and they beat the air about nothing which toucheth us, unless they mean that we ought to abrogate all Romish ceremonies which, in their judgment, have either no use, or less use than some other might have. But then must they show some commission, whereby they are authorized to sit as judges, and we required to take their judgment

for good in this case. Otherwise their sentences will not be greatly regarded, when they oppose their "Me thinketh" unto the orders of the Church of England, as in the question about surplices one of them doth. "If we look to the colour, black me thinketh is more decent; if to the form, a garment down to the foot hath a great deal more comeliness in it." If they think that we ought to prove the ceremonies commodious which we have retained, they do in this point very greatly deceive themselves. For in all right and equity, that which the Church hath received and held so long for good, that which public approbation hath ratified, must carry the benefit of presumption with it to be accounted meet and convenient. They which have stood up as yesterday to challenge it of defect, must prove their challenge. If we being defendants do answer, that the ceremonies in question are godly, comely, decent, profitable for the Church, their reply is childish and unorderedly to say that we demand the thing in question, and show the poverty of our cause, the goodness whereof we are fain to beg that our adversaries would grant. For on our part this must be the answer, which orderly proceeding doth require. The burthen of proving doth rest on them. In them it is frivolous to say we ought not to use bad ceremonies of the Church of Rome, and presume all such bad as it pleaseth themselves to dislike, unless we can persuade them the contrary. Besides, they are herein opposite also to themselves. For what one thing is so common with them, as to use the custom of the Church of Rome for an argument to prove that such and such ceremonies cannot be good and profitable for us, inasmuch as that Church useth them? Which usual kind of disputing, sheweth that they do not disallow only those Romish ceremonies which are unprofitable, but count all unprofitable which are Romish; that is to say, which have been devised by the Church of Rome, or which are used in that Church, and not prescribed in the word of God. For this is the only limitation which they can use suitable unto their other positions. And, therefore, the cause which they yield, why they hold it lawful to retain in doctrine and in discipline some things as good which yet are common to the Church of Rome, is, for that those good things are perpetual commandments, in whose place no other can come, but ceremonies are changeable. So that their judgment in truth is, that whatsoever

by the word of God is not changeable in the Church of Rome, that Church's using is a cause why reformed Churches ought to change it, and not to think it good or profitable. And lest we seem to father anything upon them more than is properly their own, let them read even their own words, where they complain that "we are thus constrained to be like unto the Papists in any their ceremonies;" yea, they urge that this cause, although it were alone, ought to move them to whom that belongeth, to do them away, "forasmuch as they are their ceremonies," and that the B. of Salisbury doth justify this their complaint. The clause is untrue which they add concerning the B. of Salisbury; but the sentence doth show, that we do them no wrong in setting down the state of the question between us thus: Whether we ought to abolish out of the Church of England all such orders, rites, and ceremonies, as are established in the Church of Rome, and are not prescribed in the word of God. For the affirmative whereof we are now to answer such proofs of theirs as have been before alleged.

5. Let the Church of Rome be what it will, let them that are of it be the people of God, and our fathers in the Christian faith, or let them be otherwise, hold them for Catholics or hold them for heretics, it is not a thing either one way or other in this present question greatly material. Our conformity with them in such things as have been proposed is not proved as yet unlawful by all this St. Augustine hath said, yea, and we have allowed his saying, "That the custom of the people of God, and the decrees of our forefathers are to be kept, touching those things whereof the Scripture had neither one way nor other given us any charge." What then? Doth it here therefore follow, that they being neither the people of God, nor our forefathers, are for that cause in nothing to be followed? This consequent were good if so be it were granted that only the custom of the people of God, and the decrees of our forefathers are in such case to be observed. But then should no other kind of later laws in the Church be good, which were a gross absurdity to think. St. Augustine's speech, therefore, doth import that where we have no divine precept if yet we have the custom of the people of God, or a decree of our forefathers, this is a law and must be kept. Notwithstanding, it is not denied but that we lawfully may observe the positive constitutions of our own Churches,

although the same were but yesterday made by ourselves alone. Nor is there anything in this to prove that the Church of England might not by law receive orders, rites, or customs from the Church of Rome, although they were neither the people of God nor yet our forefathers. How much less when we have received from them nothing but that which they did themselves receive from such, as we cannot deny to have been the people of God, yea, such as either we must acknowledge for our own forefathers, or else disdain the race of Christ.

6. The rites and orders wherein we follow the Church of Rome, are of no other kind than such as the Church of Geneva itself doth follow them in. We follow the Church of Rome in more things; yet they in some things of the same nature about which our present controversy is: so that the difference is not in the kind, but in the number of rites only, wherein they and we do follow the Church of Rome. The use of wafer cakes, the custom of godfathers and godmothers in baptism, are things not commanded nor forbidden in the Scripture; things which have been of old, and are retained in the Church of Rome, even at this very hour. Is conformity with Rome in such things a blemish unto the Church of England, and unto Churches abroad an ornament? Let them, if not for the reverence they owe unto this Church, in the bowels whereof they have received I trust, that precious and blessed vigour which shall quicken them to eternal life; yet, at the leastwise for the singular affection which they do bear towards others, take heed how they strike, lest they wound whom they would not. For undoubtedly it cutteth deeper than they are aware of, when they plead that even such ceremonies of the Church of Rome, as contain in them nothing which is not of itself agreeable to the word of God, ought nevertheless to be abolished, and that neither the word of God, nor reason, nor the examples of the eldest Churches, do permit the Church of Rome to be therein followed. Heretics they are, and they are our neighbours. By us and amongst us they lead their lives. But what then? Therefore no ceremony of theirs lawful for us to use? We must yield and will that none are lawful, if God himself be a precedent against the use of any. But how appeareth it that God is *so*? Hereby they say it doth appear, in that God severed *His people* from the heathens, but specially from the

Egyptians, and such nations as were nearest neighbours unto them, by forbidding them to do those things which were in themselves very lawful to be done, yea, very profitable some, and incommodious to be forborne; such things it pleased God to forbid them, only because those heathens did them, with whom conformity in the same things might have bred infection. Thus in shaving, cutting, apparel wearing, yea, in sundry kinds of meat also, swine's flesh, conies, and such like, they were forbidden to do so and so, because the Gentiles did so. And the end why God forbade them such things was, to sever them for fear of infection by a great and an high wall from other nations, as St. Paul teacheth. The cause of more careful separation from the nearest nations was the greatness of danger to be especially by them infected. Now, Papists are to us as those nations were unto Israel. Therefore, if the wisdom of God be our guide, we cannot allow conformity with them, no not in any such indifferent ceremony. Our direct answer hereunto is, that for anything here alleged we may still doubt, whether the Lord in such indifferent ceremonies as those whereof we dispute, did frame His people of set purpose unto any utter dissimilitude, either with Egyptians, or with any other nation else. And if God did not forbid them all such indifferent ceremonies, then our conformity with the Church of Rome in some such is not hitherto as yet disproved, although Papists were unto us as those heathens were unto Israel. "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwelt, ye shall not do, saith the Lord; and after the manner of the land of Canaan, whither I will bring you, shall ye not do, neither walk in their ordinances. Do after my judgments, and keep my ordinances to walk therein; I am the Lord your God." The speech is indefinite, "ye shall not be like them." It is not general, "ye shall not be like them in anything, or like unto them in anything indifferent, or like unto them in any indifferent ceremony of theirs." Seeing, therefore, it is not set down how far the bounds of His speech concerning dissimilitude should reach, how can any man assure us that it extendeth farther than to those things only, wherein the nations there mentioned were idolatrous, or did against that which the law of God commandeth? Nay, doth it not seem a thing very probable, that God doth purposely add, "Do after my judgments," as giving thereby to understand, that His

meaning in the former sentence was but to bear similitude in such things as were repugnant unto the ordinances, laws and statutes which He had given? Egyptians and Canaanites are for example' sake named unto them, because the customs of the one they had been, and of the other they should be best acquainted with. But that wherein they might not be like unto either of them, was such per-adventure as had been no whit less unlawful, although those nations had never been. So that there is no necessity to think that God for fear of infection by reason of nearness forbade them to be like to the Canaanites or the Egyptians, in those things which otherwise had been lawful enough. For I would know what one thing was in those nations, and is here forbidden, being indifferent in itself, yet forbidden only because they used it. In the laws of Israel we find it written, "ye shall not cut round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou tear the tufts of thy beard." These things were usual amongst those nations, and in themselves they are indifferent. But are they indifferent being used as signs of immoderate and hopeless lamentation for the dead? In this sense it is that the law forbiddeth them. For which cause the very next words following are, "ye shall not cut your flesh for the dead, nor make any print of a mark upon you; I am the Lord." The like in Leviticus, where speech is of mourning for the dead, "They shall not make bald parts upon their head, nor shave off the locks of their beard, nor make any cutting in their flesh." Again, in Deuteronomy, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God, ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make you baldness between your eyes for the dead." What is this but in effect the same which the Apostle doth more plainly express, saying, "Sorrow not as they do which have no hope?" The very light of Nature itself was able to see herein a fault; that which those nations did use, having been also in use with others, the ancient Roman laws do forbid. That shaving therefore, and cutting which the law doth mention, was not a matter in itself indifferent, and forbidden only because it was in use amongst such idolaters as were neighbours to the people of God; but to use it had been a crime, though no other people or nation under heaven should have done it saving only themselves. As for those laws concerning attire, "There shall no garment of linen and woollen come upon thee;" as also those touching food and diet, wherein

swine's flesh together with sundry other meats are forbidden; the use of these things had been indeed of itself harmless and indifferent: so that hereby it doth appear, how the law of God forbade in some special consideration such things as were lawful enough in themselves. But yet even here they likewise fail of that they intend. For it doth not appear that the consideration in regard whereof the law forbiddeth these things, was because those nations did use them. Likely enough it is that the Canaanites used to feed as well on sheep's as on swine's flesh; and therefore, if the forbidding of the latter had no other reason than dissimilitude with that people they which of their own heads allege this for reason, can show, I think, some reason more than we are able to find, why the former was not also forbidden. Might there not be some other mystery in this prohibition than they think of? Yes, some other mystery there was in it by all likelihood. For what reason is there which should but induce, and therefore much less enforce, us to think that care of dissimilitude between the people of God and the heathen nations about them, was any more the cause of forbidding them to put on garments of sundry stuff than of charging them withal not to sow their fields with meslin, or that this was any more the cause of forbidding them to eat swine's flesh than of charging them withal not to eat the flesh of eagles, hawks, and the like? Wherefore, although the Church of Rome were to us, as to Israel the Egyptians and Canaanite swere of old, yet doth it not follow that the wisdom of God without respect doth teach us to erect between us and them a partition wall of difference, in such things indifferent as have been hitherto disputed of.

7. Neither is the example of the eldest Churches a whit more available to this purpose. Notwithstanding some fault undoubtedly there is in the very resemblance of idolaters. Were it not some kind of blemish to be like unto infidels and heathens, it would not so usually be objected; men would not think it any advantage in the causes of religion to be able therewith justly to charge their adversaries as they do. Wherefore to the end that it may a little more plainly appear, what force this hath, and how far the same extendeth: we are to note how all men are naturally desirous, that they may seem neither to judge, *nor to do amiss*, because every error and offence is a stain to

the beauty of Nature, for which cause it blusheth thereat, but glorieth in the contrary. From whence it riseth, that they which disgrace or depress the credit of others do it either in both or in one of these. To have been in either directed by a weak and unperfect rule, argueth imbecility and imperfection. Men being either led by reason, or by imitation of other men's examples, if their persons be odious whose example we choose to follow, as namely if we frame our opinions to that which condemned heretics think, or direct our actions according to that which is practised and done by them ; it lieth as an heavy prejudice against us, unless somewhat mightier than their bare example, did move us to think or do the same things with them. Christian men, therefore, having besides the common light of all men so great help of heavenly direction from above, together with the lamps of so bright examples as the Church of God doth yield, it cannot but worthily seem reproachful for us to leave both the one and the other to become disciples unto the most hateful sort that live, to do as they do, only because we see their example before us, and have a delight to follow it. Thus we may, therefore, safely conclude, that it is not evil simply to concur with the heathens either in opinion or in action, and that conformity with them is only then a disgrace, when either we follow them in that they think and do amiss, or follow them generally in that they do, without other reason than only the liking we have to the pattern of their example, which liking doth intimate a more universal approbation of them than is allowable. Faustus the Manichean, therefore, objecting against the Jews that they forsook the idols of the Gentiles, but their temples, and oblations, and altars, and priesthoods, and all kind of ministry of holy things, they exercised even as the Gentiles did, yea, more superstitiously a great deal ; against the Catholic Christians likewise, that between them and the heathens there was in many things little difference : " From them," saith Faustus, " ye have learned to hold that one only God is the author of all, their sacrifices ye have turned into feasts of charity, their idols into martyrs whom ye honour with the like religious offices unto theirs, the ghosts of the dead ye appease with wine and delicacies, the festival days of the nations ye celebrate together with them, and of *their kind of life* ye have utterly changed nothing." *St. Augustine's defence in behalf of both is, that touching the*

matters of action, Jews and Catholic Christians were free from the Gentiles' faultiness, even in those things which were objected as tokens of their agreement with the Gentiles : and concerning their consent in opinion, they did not hold the same with the Gentiles, because Gentiles had so taught, but because heaven and earth had so witnessed the same to be truth, that neither the one sort could err in being fully persuaded thereof, nor the other but err in case they should not consent with them. In things of their own nature indifferent, if either counsels or particular men have at any time with sound judgment misliked conformity between the Church of God and infidels, the cause thereof hath been somewhat else than only affectation of dissimilitude. They saw it necessary so to do, in respect of some special accident, which the Church being not always subject unto, hath not still cause to do the like. For example, in the dangerous days of trial, wherein there was no way for the truth of Jesus Christ to triumph over infidelity, but through the constancy of His saints, whom yet a natural desire to save themselves from the flame might peradventure cause to join with Pagans in external customs, too far using the same as a cloak to conceal themselves in, and a mist to darken the eyes of infidels withal : for remedy hereof, those laws it might be were provided, which forbad that Christians should deck their houses with boughs, as the Pagans did use to do, or rest those festival days whereon the Pagans rested, or celebrate such feasts as were, though not heathenish, yet such that the simpler sort of heathens might be beguiled in so thinking them. As for Tertullian's judgment concerning the rites and orders of the Church, no man having judgment can be ignorant how just exceptions may be taken against it. His opinion touching the Catholic Church was as unindifferent, as touching our Church the opinion of them that favour this pretended reformation is. He judged all them who did not Montanize to be but carnally minded, he judged them still over-abstractly to fawn upon the heathens and to curry favour with infidels. Which as the Catholic Church did well provide that they might not do indeed, so Tertullian over-often thought discontentment carpeeth injuriously at them, as though they did it even when they were free from such meaning. But if it were so that either the judgment of those councils before alleged, or of Tertullian himself against the Christians, are in no such consideration to

be understood as we have mentioned ; if it were so that men are condemned as well of the one as of the other, only for using the ceremonies of a religion contrary unto their own, and that this cause is such as ought to prevail no less with us than with them, shall it not follow that seeing there is still between our religion and Paganism the selfsame contrariety, therefore we are still no less rebukable if we now deck our houses with boughs, or send New Year's gifts unto our friends, or feast on those days which the Gentiles then did, or sit after prayer as they were accustomed? For so they infer upon the premises, that as great difference as commodiously may be there should be in all outward ceremonies between the people of God and them which are not His people. Again, they teach, as hath been declared, that there is not as great a difference as may be between them, except the one do avoid whatsoever rites and ceremonies uncommanded of God the other doth embrace ; so that generally they teach that the very difference of spiritual condition itself between the servants of Christ and others requireth such difference in ceremonies between them, although the one be never so far disjoined in time or place from the other. But in case the people of God and Belial do chance to be neighbours, then, as the danger of infection is greater, so the same difference they say is thereby made more necessary. In this respect, as the Jews were severed from the heathen, so most especially from the heathen nearest them. And in the same respect we which ought to differ howsoever from the Church of Rome, are now they say, by reason of our nearness, more bound to differ from them in ceremonies than from Turks. A strange kind of speech unto Christian ears, and such as I hope they themselves do acknowledge unadvisedly uttered. "We are not so much to fear infection from Turks as from Papists." What of that? We must remember that by conforming rather ourselves in that respect to Turks, we should be spreaders of a worse infection into others than any we are likely to draw from Papists by our conformity with them in ceremonies. If they did hate, as Turks do, the Christian, or as Canaanites of old did the Jewish religion even in gross, the circumstance of local nearness in them unto us *might happily* enforce in us a duty of greater separation *from them* than from those other mentioned ; but forasmuch as Papists are so much in Christ nearer unto us than Turks,

is there any reasonable man, trow you, but will judge it meeter that our ceremonies of Christian religion should be Popish than Turkish or heathenish? Especially considering that we were not brought to dwell amongst them as Israel in Canaan, having not been of them. For even a very part of them we were; and when God did, by His good Spirit, put it into our hearts first to reform ourselves (whence grew our separation), and then by all good means to seek also their reformation, had we not only cut off their corruptions, but also estranged ourselves from them in things indifferent, who seeth not how greatly prejudicial this might have been to so good a cause, and what occasion it had given them to think (to their greater obduration in evil) that through a forward or wanton desire of innovation, we did unconstrainedly those things for which conscience was pretended? Howsoever the case doth stand, as Judah had been rather to choose conformity in things indifferent with Israel when they were nearest opposites than with the farthest removed Pagans, so we, in like case, much rather with Papists than with Turks. I might add further, for more full and complete answer, so much concerning the large odds between the case of the eldest Churches in regard of those heathens and ours in respect of the Church of Rome, that very cavillation itself should be satisfied, and have no shift to fly unto.

8. But that no one thing may detain us over long, I return to their reasons against our conformity with that Church. That extreme dissimilitude which they urge upon us is now commended as our best and safest policy for establishment of sound religion, the ground of which politic position is that "evils must be cured by their contraries," and therefore the cure of the Church, infected with the poison of Antichristianity, must be done by that which is thereunto as contrary as may be. A meddled estate of the orders of the Gospel and the ceremonies of Popery is not the best way to banish Popery. We are contrariwise of opinion that he which will perfectly recover a sick and restore a diseased body unto health must not endeavour so much to bring it to a state of simple contrariety as of fit proportion in contrariety unto those evils which are to be cured. He that will take away extreme heat by setting the body in extremity of cold, shall undoubtedly remove the disease, but together with it the diseased too. The first

thing, therefore, in skilful cures is the knowledge of the part affected; the next is of the evil which doth affect it; the last is not only of the kind, but also of the measure of contrary things whereby to remove it. They which measure religion by dislike of the Church of Rome think every man so much the more sound by how much he can make the corruptions thereof to seem more large. And therefore some there are, namely, the Arians in reformed Churches of Poland, which imagine the canker to have eaten so far into the very bones and marrow of the Church of Rome, as if it had not so much as a sound belief, no, not concerning God himself, but that the very belief of the Trinity were a part of Antichristian corruption, and that the wonderful providence of God did bring to pass that the Bishop of the See of Rome should be famous for his triple crown—a sensible mark whereby the world might know him to be that mystical beast spoken of in the Revelation to be that great and notorious Antichrist in no one respect so much as in this, that he maintaineth the doctrine of the Trinity. Wisdom, therefore, and skill is requisite to know what parts are sound in that Church and what corrupted. Neither is it to all men apparent, which complain of unsound parts. with what kind of unsoundness every such part is possessed. They can say that in doctrine, in discipline, in prayers, in sacraments, the Church of Rome hath (as it hath indeed) very foul and gross corruptions, the nature whereof notwithstanding, because they have not for the most part exact skill and knowledge to discern, they think that amiss many times which is not, and the salve of reformation they mightily call for; but where and what the sores are which need it, as they wot full little, so they think it not greatly material to search. Such men's contentment must be wrought by stratagem, the usual method of art is not for them. But with those that profess more than ordinary and common knowledge of good from evil, with them that are able to put a difference between things naught and things indifferent in the Church of Rome, we are yet at controversy about the manner of removing that which is naught; whether it may not be perfectly helped, unless that also which is indifferent be cut off with it so far till no rite or ceremony remain which the Church of Rome hath, being not found in the word of God. If we think this too extreme, they reply that to draw men from great excess, it is not amiss though we use

them unto somewhat less than is competent ; and that a crooked stick is not straightened unless it be bent as far on the clean contrary side, that so it may settle itself at the length in a middle estate of evenness between both. But how can these comparisons stand them in any stead ? When they urge us to extreme opposition against the Church of Rome, do they mean we should be drawn unto it only for a time, and afterwards return to a mediocrity ? or was it the purpose of those reformed Churches, which utterly abolished all Popish ceremonies, to come in the end back again to the middle point of evenness and moderation ? Then have we conceived amiss of their meaning. For we have always thought their opinion to be that utter inconformity with the Church of Rome was not an extremity whereunto we should be drawn for a time, but the very mediocrity itself wherein they meant we should ever continue. Now by these comparisons it seemeth clean contrary, that howsoever they have bent themselves at first to an extreme contrariety against the Romish Church, yet therein they will continue no longer than only till such time as some more moderate course for establishment of the Church may be concluded. Yea, albeit this were not at the first their intent, yet surely now there is great cause to lead them unto it. They have seen that experience of the former policy, which may cause the authors of it to hang down their heads. When Germany had stricken off that which appeared corrupt in the doctrine of the Church of Rome, but seemed nevertheless in discipline still to retain therewith very great conformity : France by that rule of policy, which hath been before mentioned, took away the Popish orders which Germany did retain. But process of time hath brought more light into the world, whereby men perceiving that they of the religion in France have also retained some orders which were before in the Church of Rome, and are not commanded in the word of God ; there hath arisen a sect in England which, following still the very selfsame rule of policy, seeketh to reform even the French reformation, and purge out from thence also dregs of Popery. These have not taken as yet such root that they are able to establish anything. But if they had, what would spring out of their stock, and how far the unquiet wit of man might be carried with rules of such policy, God doth know. *The trial which we have lived to see may some-*

what teach us what posterity is to fear. But our Lord of His infinite mercy, avert whatsoever evil our swerings on the one hand or on the other may threaten unto the state of His Church.

9. That the Church of Rome doth hereby take occasion to blaspheme, and to say our religion is not able to stand of itself, unless it lean upon the staff of their ceremonies, is not a matter of so great moment, that it did need to be objected, or doth deserve to receive answer. The name of blasphemy in this place is like the shoe of Hercules on a child's foot. If the Church of Rome do use any such kind of silly exprobration, it is no such ugly thing to the ear that we should think the honour and credit of our religion to receive thereby any great wound. They which hereof make so perilous a matter, do seem to imagine that we have erected of late a frame of some new religion; the furniture whereof we should not have borrowed from our enemies, lest they relieving us might afterwards laugh and gibe at our poverty: whereas in truth the ceremonies which we have taken from such as were before us, are not things that belong to this or that sect, but they are the ancient rites and customs of the Church of Christ; whereof, ourselves being a part, we have the selfsame interest in them which our fathers before us had, from whom the same are descended unto us. Again, in case we had been so much beholding privately unto them, doth the reputation of one Church stand by saying unto another, I need thee not? If some should be so vain and impotent as to mar a benefit with reproachful upbraiding, where at the least they suppose themselves to have bestowed some good turn; yet surely a wise body's part it were not to put out his fire, because his fond and foolish neighbour from whom he borrowed peradventure wherewith to kindle it, might happily cast him therewith in the teeth, saying, were it not for me thou wouldst freeze, and not be able to heat thyself. As for that other argument derived from the secret affection of Papists, with whom our conformity in certain ceremonies is said to put them in great hope, that their whole religion in time will have re-entrance; and, therefore, none are so clamorous amongst us for the observation of these ceremonies, as Papists and such as Papists suborn to speak *for them*, whereby it clearly appeareth how much they *rejoice*, how much they triumph in these things; our answer

hereunto is still the same, that the benefit we have by such ceremonies overweigheth even this also. No man which is not exceeding partial can well deny, but that there is most just cause wherefore we should be offended greatly at the Church of Rome. Notwithstanding at such times as we are to deliberate for ourselves, the freer our minds are from all distempered affections the sounder and better is our judgment. When we are in a fretting mood at the Church of Rome, and with that angry disposition enter into any cogitation of the order and rites of our Church, taking particular survey of them, we are sure to have always one eye fixed upon the countenance of our enemies, and according to the blithe or heavy aspect thereof, our other eye showeth some other suitable token either of dislike or approbation towards our own orders. For the rule of our judgment in such case being only that of Homer, "This is the thing which our enemies would have;" what they seem contented with, even for that very cause we reject; and there is nothing but it pleaseth us much the better if we espy that it galleth them. Miserable were the state and condition of that Church, the weighty affairs whereof should be ordered by those deliberations, wherein such an humour as this were predominant. We have most heartily to thank God, therefore, that they amongst us to whom the first consultations of causes of this kind fell, were men which, aiming at another mark, namely, the glory of God and the good of this His Church, took that which they judged thereunto necessary, not rejecting any good or convenient thing, only because the Church of Rome might perhaps like it. If we have that which is meet and right, although they be glad, we are not to envy them this their solace; we do not think it a duty of ours to be in every such thing their tormentors. And whereas it is said that Popery for want of this utter extirpation hath in some places taken root and flourished again, but hath not been able to re-establish itself in any place after provision made against it by utter evacuation of all Romish ceremonies; and, therefore, as long as we hold anything like unto them we put them in some more hope than if all were taken away, as we deny not but this may be true, so being of two evils to choose the less we hold it better that the friends and favourers of the Church of Rome should be in some kind of hope to have *a corrupt religion restored*, than both we and they conceive

just fear, lest under colour of rooting out Popery, the most effectual means to bear up the state of religion be removed, and so a way made either for paganism or for extreme barbarity to enter. If desire of weakening the hope of others should turn us away from the course we have taken, how much more the care of preventing our own fear withhold us from that we are urged unto? Especially seeing that our own fear we know, but we are not so certain what hope the rites and orders of our Church have bred in the hearts of others. For it is no sufficient argument therefore to say, that in maintaining and urging these ceremonies none are so clamorous as Papists, and they whom Papists suborn; this speech being more hard to justify than the former, and so their proof more doubtful than the thing itself which they prove. He that were certain that this is true must have marked who they be that speak for ceremonies, he must have noted who amongst them doth speak oftenest or is most earnest, he must have been both acquainted thoroughly with the religion of such, and also privy what conferences or compacts are passed in secret between them and others, which kinds of notice are not wont to be vulgar and common. Yet they which allege this would have it taken as a thing that needeth no proof, a thing which all men know and see. And if so be it were granted them as true, what gain they by it? Sundry of them that be Popish are eager in maintenance of ceremonies. Is it so strange a matter to find a good thing furthered by ill men of a sinister intent and purpose, whose forwardness is not therefore a bridle to such as favour the same cause with a better and sincerer meaning? They that seek, as they say, the removing of all Popish orders out of the Church, and reckon the state of bishops in the number of those orders, do (I doubt not) presume that the cause which they prosecute is holy. Notwithstanding it is their own ingenuous acknowledgment that even this very cause which they term so often by an excellency, "The Lord's cause is *gratissima*, most acceptable unto some which hope for prey and spoil by it, and that our age hath store of such, and that such are the very sectaries of Dionysius the famous atheist." Now if hereupon we should upbraid them with irreligious, as they do us with superstitious, favourers, if we should follow them in their own kind of pleading, and say *that the most clamorous for this pretended reformation are either atheists, or else proctors suborned by atheists; the*

answer which herein they would make unto us let them apply unto themselves, and there an end. For they must not forbid us to presume our cause in defence of our Church orders to be as good as theirs against them, till the contrary be made manifest to the world.

10. In the meanwhile sorry we are that any good and godly mind should be grieved with that which is done. But to remedy their grief lieth not so much in us as in themselves. They do not wish to be made glad with the hurt of the Church, and to remove all out of the Church, whereat they show themselves to be sorrowful, would be as we are persuaded hurtful, if not pernicious thereunto. Till they be able to persuade the contrary, they must, and will, I doubt not, find out some other good means to cheer up themselves. Amongst which means the example of Geneva may serve for one? Have not they the old Popish custom of using god-fathers and godmothers in baptism, the old Popish custom of administering the blessed sacrament of the holy Eucharist with wafer cakes? These things the godly there can digest. Wherefore should not the godly here learn to do the like, both in them and in the rest of the like nature? Some further mean peradventure it might be to assuage their grief, if so be they did consider the revenge they take on them, which have been, as they interpret it, the workers of their continuance in so great grief so long. For if the maintenance of ceremonies be a corrosive to such as oppugn them, undoubtedly to such as maintain them it can be no great pleasure when they behold how that which they reverence is oppugned. And, therefore, they that judge themselves martyrs when they are grieved, should think withal what they are when they grieve. For we are still to put them in mind that the cause doth make no difference, for that it must be presumed as good at the least on our part as on theirs, till it be in the end decided who have stood for truth and who for error. So that till then the most effectual medicine, and withal the most sound to ease their grief, must not be (in our opinion) the taking away of those things whereat they are grieved, but the altering of that persuasion which they have concerning the same. For this we therefore both pray and labour the more because we are also persuaded that it is but conceit in them to think that those Romish ceremonies whereof we have hitherto spoken are like leprous clothes, infectious unto the Church, or like soft and gentle

poisons, the venom whereof being insensibly pernicious, worketh death, and yet is never felt working. Thus they say—but because they say it only, and the world hath not as yet had so great experience of their art in curing the diseases of the Church, that the bare authority of their word should persuade in a cause so weighty—they may not think much if it be required at their hands to show: first, by what means so deadly infection can grow from similitude between us and the Church of Rome in these things indifferent; secondly, for that it were infinite if the Church should provide against every such evil as may come to pass, it is not sufficient that they show possibility of dangerous event, unless there appear some likelihood also of the same to follow in us, except we prevent it. Nor is this enough, unless it be moreover made plain that there is no good and sufficient way of prevention but by evacuating clean, and by emptying the Church of every such rite and ceremony as is presently called in question. Till this be done their good affection towards the safety of the Church is acceptable, but the way they prescribe us to preserve it by must rest in suspense. And lest hereat they take occasion to turn upon us the speech of the Prophet Jeremiah used against Babylon, “Behold we have done our endeavour to cure the diseases of Babylon, but she through her wilfulness doth rest uncured,” let them consider into what straits the Church might drive itself in being guided by this their counsel. Their axiom is that the sound believing Church of Jesus Christ may not be like heretical churches in any of those indifferent things which men make choice of, and do not take by prescript appointment of the Word of God. In the Word of God the use of bread is prescribed as a thing without which the Eucharist may not be celebrated, but as for the kind of bread, it is not denied to be a thing indifferent. Being indifferent of itself, we are by this axiom of theirs to avoid the use of unleavened bread in their sacrament, because such bread the Church of Rome, being heretical, useth. But doth not the selfsame axiom bar us even from leavened bread also, which the Church of the Grecians useth? the opinions whereof are in a number of things the same for which we condemn the Church of Rome, and in some things erroneous, where the Church of Rome is acknowledged to be sound, as namely in the article proceeding of the Holy Ghost. And lest here they should say that because the Greek Church is farther off, and the Church

of Rome nearer, we are in that respect rather to use that which the Church of Rome useth not, let them imagine a reformed Church in the city of Venice, where a Greek Church and a Popish both are. And when both these are equally near, let them consider what the third shall do. Without either leavened or unleavened bread it can have no sacrament; the Word of God doth tie it to neither, and their axiom doth exclude it from both. If this constrain them, as it must, to grant that their axiom is not to take any place, save in those things only where the Church hath larger scope, it resteth that they search out some stronger reason than they have as yet alleged, otherwise they constrain not us to think that the Church is tied unto any such rule or axiom, no not then when she hath the widest field to walk in and the greatest store of choice.

11. Against such ceremonies generally as are the same in the Church of England and of Rome we see what hath been hitherto alleged. Albeit, therefore, we do not find the one Church's having of such things to be sufficient cause why the other should not have them; nevertheless, in case it may be proved that amongst the number of rites and orders common unto both, there are particulars the use whereof is utterly unlawful, in regard of some special bad and noisome quality, there is no doubt but we ought to relinquish such rites and orders, what freedom soever we have to retain the other still. As therefore we have heard their general exception against all those things which being not commanded in the Word of God were first received in the Church of Rome, and from thence have been derived into ours, so it followeth that now we proceed unto certain kinds of them as being excepted against not only for that they are in the Church of Rome, but are besides either Jewish, or abused unto idolatry, and so grown scandalous. The Church of Rome, they say, being ashamed of the simplicity of the Gospel, did almost out of all religions take whatsoever had any fair and gorgeous show, borrowing in that respect from the Jews sundry of their abolished ceremonies. Thus by foolish and ridiculous imitation all their massing furniture almost they took from the law, lest having an altar and a priest they should want vestments for their stage; so that whatsoever we have in common with the Church of Rome, if the same be of this kind we ought to remove it. *Constantine the emperor, speaking of the keeping of the feast*

of Easter, saith, "That it is an unworthy thing to have anything common with that most spiteful company of the Jews." And a little after he saith, "that it is most absurd and against reason that the Jews should vaunt and glory that the Christians could not keep those things without their doctrine." And in another place it is said after this sort, "It is convenient so to order the matter that we have nothing common with that nation." The Council of Laodicea, which was afterward confirmed by the Sixth General Council, decreed that the Christians should not take unleavened bread of the Jews, or communicate with their impiety. For the easier manifestation of truth in this point two things there are which must be considered, namely, the causes wherefore the Church should decline from Jewish ceremonies, and how far it ought so to do. One cause is that the Jews were the deadliest and spitefullest enemies of Christianity that were in the world, and in this respect their orders so far forth to be shunned, as we have already set down in handling the matter of heathenish ceremonies. For no enemies being so venomous against Christ as Jews, they were of all others most odious, and by that means least to be used as fit Church patterns for imitation. Another cause is the solemn abrogation of the Jews' ordinances; which ordinances for us to resume were to check our Lord himself which hath disannulled them. But how far this second cause doth extend it is not on all sides fully agreed upon. And touching those things whereunto it reacheth not, although there be small cause wherefore the Church should frame itself to the Jews' example, in respect of their persons which are most hateful; yet God himself having been the author of their laws, herein they are (notwithstanding the former consideration) still worthy to be honoured, and to be followed above others as much as the state of things will bear. Jewish ordinances had some things natural, and of the perpetuity of those things no man doubteth. That which was positive, we likewise know to have been by the coming of Christ partly necessary not to be kept, and partly indifferent to be kept or not. Of the former kind circumcision and sacrifice were. For this point Stephen was accused, and the evidence which his accusers brought against him in judgment was; "This man ceaseth *not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the*

ordinances that Moses gave us." True it is that this doctrine was then taught, which unbelievers condemning for blasphemy did therein commit that which they did condemn. The apostles notwithstanding from whom Stephen had received it did not so teach the abrogation, no not of those things which were necessarily to cease, but that even the Jews being Christian might for a time continue in them. And, therefore in Jerusalem the first Christian bishop not circumcised was Mark, and he not bishop till the days of Adrian the Emperor, after the overthrow of Jerusalem, there having been fifteen bishops before him which were all of the circumcision. The Christian Jews did think at the first not only themselves, but the Christian Gentiles also, bound, and that necessarily, to observe the whole law. There went forth certain of the sect of Pharisees which did believe, and they coming unto Antioch, taught that it was necessary for the Gentiles to be circumcised, and to keep the law of Moses. Whereupon there grew dissension, Paul and Barnabas disputing against them. The determination of the council held at Jerusalem concerning this matter, was finally this, "Touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and determined that they observe no such thing." Their protestation by letters is, "Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which departed from us have troubled you with words, and cumbered your minds, saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law, know that we gave them no such commandment." Paul, therefore, continued still teaching the Gentiles, not only that they were not bound to observe the laws of Moses, but that the observation of those laws which were necessarily to be abrogated, was in them altogether unlawful. In which point his doctrine was misreported, as though he had everywhere preached this, not only concerning the Gentiles, but also touching the Jews. Wherefore coming unto James and the rest of the clergy at Jerusalem they told him plainly of it, saying, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousand Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. Now they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are amongst the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and sayest that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to live after the customs." And hereupon they gave him counsel to make it apparent in the eyes of all men that those flying reports were untrue, and that himself being a Jew, kept the law even as they did. In some things, therefore, we see the apostles

did teach that there ought not to be conformity between the Christian Jews and Gentiles. How many things this law of inconformity did comprehend there is no need we should stand to examine. This general is true, that the Gentiles were not made conformable unto the Jews in that which was necessarily to cease at the coming of Christ. Touching things positive which might either cease or continue as occasion should require, the apostles, tendering the zeal of the Jews, thought it necessary to bind even the Gentiles for a time to abstain, as the Jews did, from things offered unto idols, from blood, from strangled. These decrees were everywhere delivered unto the Gentiles to be straightly observed and kept. In the other matters, where the Gentiles were free, and the Jews in their own opinion still tied, the apostles' doctrine unto the Jew was, "Condemn not the Gentile," unto the Gentile, "Despise not the Jew"; the one sort they warned to take heed that scrupulosity did not make them rigorous, in giving unadvised sentence against their brethren which were free; the other, that they did not become scandalous by abusing their liberty and freedom to the offence of their weak brethren which were scrupulous. From hence, therefore, two conclusions there are which may evidently be drawn—the first, that whatsoever conformity of positive laws the apostles did bring in between the Churches of Jews and Gentiles, it was in those things only which might either cease or continue a shorter or a longer time, as occasion did most require; the second, that they did not impose upon the Churches of the Gentiles any part of the Jews' ordinances with bond of necessary and perpetual observation (as we all both by doctrine and practice acknowledge), but only in respect of the conveniency and fitness for the present state of the Church as then it stood. The words of the Council's decree concerning the Gentiles are, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no more burden saving only those things of necessity, abstinence from idol offerings, from strangled and blood, and from fornication." So that in other things positive which the coming of Christ did not necessarily extinguish, the Gentiles were left altogether free. Neither ought it to seem unreasonable, that the Gentiles should necessarily be bound and tied to Jewish ordinances *so far forth as that decree importeth*. For to the Jew, who *knew that their difference from other nations which were aliens and strangers from God did especially consist in this,*

that God's people had positive ordinances given to them of God himself, it seemed marvellous hard that the Christian Gentiles should be incorporated into the same commonwealth with God's own chosen people, and be subject to no part of His statutes, more than only the law of Nature, which heathens count themselves bound unto. It was an opinion constantly received amongst the Jews, that God did deliver unto the sons of Noah seven precepts: namely, to live in some form of regiment under, first, public laws; secondly, to serve and call upon the name of God; thirdly, to shun idolatry; fourthly, not to suffer effusion of blood; fifthly, to abhor all unclean knowledge in the flesh; sixthly, to commit no rapine: seventhly and finally, not to eat of any living creature whereof the blood was not first let out. If, therefore, the Gentiles would be exempt from the law of Moses, yet it might seem hard they should also cast off even those things positive which were observed before Moses, and which were not of the same kind with laws that were necessarily to cease. And peradventure hereupon the Council saw it expedient to determine that the Gentiles should, according unto the third, the seventh, and the fifth of those precepts, abstain from things sacrificed unto idols, from strangled and blood, and from fornication. The rest the Gentiles did of their own accord observe, Nature leading them thereunto. And did not Nature also teach them to abstain from fornication? No doubt it did. Neither can we with reason think that, as the former two are positive, so likewise this, being meant as the apostle doth otherwise usually understand it. But very marriage within a number of degrees, being, not only by the law of Moses but also by the law of the sons of Noah (for so they took it), an unlawful discovery of nakedness; this discovery of nakedness by unlawful marriages, such as Moses in the law reckoneth up, I think it for mine own part more probable to have been meant in the words of that canon, than fornication according unto the sense of the law of Nature. Words must be taken according to the matter whereof they are uttered. The apostle's command to abstain from blood. Construe this according to the law of Nature, and it will seem that homicide only is forbidden. But construe it in reference to the law of the Jews about which the question was, and it shall easily appear to have a *clean other sense*, and in any man's judgment a truer, when we *expound it, of eating, and not of shedding blood.* So if we

speaking of fornication, he that knoweth no law but only the law of Nature, must needs make thereof a narrower construction, than he which measureth the same by a law, wherein sundry kinds even of conjugal copulation are prohibited as impure, unclean, dishonest. Saint Paul himself doth term incestuous marriage fornication. If any do rather think that the Christian Gentiles themselves through the loose and corrupt custom of those times, took simple fornication for no sin, and were in that respect offensive unto believing Jews which by the law had been better taught; our proposing of another conjecture is unto theirs no prejudice. Some things therefore we see there were, wherein the Gentiles were forbidden to be like unto the Jews; some things wherein they were commanded not to be unlike. Again, some things also there were, wherein no law of God did let, but that they might be either like or unlike, as occasion should require. And unto this purpose Leo saith, "Apostolical ordinance (beloved) knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ came not into this world to undo the law, hath in such sort distinguished the mysteries of the Old Testament, that certain of them it hath chosen out to benefit evangelical knowledge withal, and for that purpose appointed that those things which before were Jewish, might now be Christian customs." The cause why the apostles did thus conform the Christians, as much as might be, according to the pattern of the Jews, was to rein them in by this means the more, and to make them cleave the better. The Church of Christ hath in no one thing so many and so contrary occasions of dealing as about Judaism; some having thought the whole Jewish law wicked and damnable in itself; some, not condemning it as the former sort absolutely, have notwithstanding judged it either sooner necessary to be abrogated, or further unlawful to be observed than truth can bear; some of scrupulous simplicity urging perpetual and universal observation of the law of Moses necessary, as the Christian Jews at the first in the apostles' times; some, as heretics, holding the same no less even after the contrary determination set down by consent of the Church at Jerusalem; finally, some being herein resolute through mere infidelity, and with open professed enmity against Christ, as unbelieving Jews. To control slanderers of the law and prophets, such as Marcionites and Manichees were, the Church in her liturgies hath intermingled with readings out of the New Testa-

ment, lessons taken out of the law and prophets; whereunto Tertullian alluding, saith of the Church of Christ, "It interminglcth with evangelical and apostolical writings, the law and the prophets; and from thence it drinketh in that faith, which with water it sealeth, clotheth with the spirit, nourisheth with the Eucharist, with martyrdom setteth forward." They would have wondered in those times to hear, that any man being not a favourer of heresy, should term this, by way of disdain, "mangling of the Gospels and Epistles." They which honour the law as an image of the wisdom of God himself, are notwithstanding, to know that the same had an end in Christ. But what? Was the law so abolished with Christ, that after His ascension the office of priest became immediately wicked, and the very name hateful, as importing the exercise of an ungodly function? No, as long as the glory of the temple continued, and till the time of that final desolation was accomplished, the very Christian Jews did continue with their sacrifices and other parts of legal service. That very law therefore which our Saviour was to abolish, did not so soon become unlawful to be observed as some imagine; nor was it afterwards unlawful so far that the very name of altar, of priest, of sacrifice itself, should be banished out of the world. For though God do now hate sacrifice, whether it be heathenish or Jewish, so that we cannot have the same things which they had, but with impiety; yet unless there be some greater let than the only evacuation of the law of Moses, the names themselves may (I hope) be retained without sin, in respect of that proportion which things established by our Saviour have unto them which by Him are abrogated. And so throughout all the writings of the ancient Fathers we see that the words which were do continue; the only difference is, that whereas before they had a literal, they now have a metaphorical use, and are as so many notes of remembrance unto us, that what they did signify in the letter is accomplished in the truth. And as no man can deprive the Church of this liberty, to use names whereunto the law was accustomed, so neither are we generally forbidden the use of things which the law hath, though it neither command us any particularity, as it did the Jews a number; and the weightiest which it did command them, are unto us in the Gospel prohibited. Touching such as *through simplicity of error did urge universal and perpetual observation of the law of Moses at the first, we have spoken*

already. Against Jewish heretics and false apostles teaching afterwards the selfsame, St. Paul in every Epistle commonly either disputeth or giveth warning. Jews that were zealous for the law, but withal infidels in respect of Christianity, and to the name of Jesus Christ most spiteful enemies, did, while they flourished, no less persecute the Church than heathens. And after their estate was overthrown they were not that way so much to be feared. Howbeit, because they had their synagogues in every famous city almost throughout the world, and by that means great opportunity to withdraw from the Christian faith, which to do they spared no labour; this gave the Church occasion to make sundry laws against them. As in the Council of Laodicea, "The festival presents which Jews or heretics use to send must not be received, nor holy days solemnized in their company." Again, "From the Jews men ought not to receive their unleavened, nor to communicate with their impieties." Which Council was afterwards indeed confirmed by the sixth general Council. But what was the true sense or meaning both of the one and the other? Were Christians here forbidden to communicate in unleavened bread because the Jews did so, being enemies of the Church? He which attentively shall weigh the words will suspect that they rather forbid communion with Jews than imitation of them; much more, if with these two decrees be compared a third in the Council of Constantinople: "Let no man either of the clergy or laity eat the unleavened of the Jews, nor enter into any familiarity with them, nor send for them in sickness, nor take physic at their hands, nor as much as go into the bath with them. If any do otherwise, being a clergyman, let him be deposed; if being a lay person, let excommunication be his punishment." If these canons were any argument that they which made them did utterly condemn similitude between the Christians and Jews, in things indifferent appertaining unto religion, either because the Jews were enemies unto the Church, or else for that their ceremonies were abrogated, these reasons had been as strong and effectual against their keeping the feast of Easter on the same day the Jews kept theirs, and not according to the custom of the West Church. For so they *did from the first beginning till Constantine's time. For in these two things the East and West Churches did interchangeably both confront the Jews, and concur with them: the West Church using unleavened bread, as the*

Jews in their passover did, but differing from them in the day whereon they kept the feast of Easter; contrariwise the East Church celebrating the feast of Easter on the same day with the Jews, but not using the same kind of bread which they did. Now if so be the East Church in using leavened bread had done well, either for that the Jews were enemies to the Church, or because Jewish ceremonies were abrogated, how should we think but that Victor, the Bishop of Rome (whom all judicious men do in that behalf disallow), did well to be so vehement and fierce in drawing them to the like dissimilitude for the feast of Easter? Again, if the West Churches had in either of those two respects affected dissimilitude with the Jews in the feast of Easter, what reason had they to draw the Eastern Church herein unto them, which reason did not enforce them to frame themselves unto it in the ceremony of leavened bread? Difference in rites should breed no controversy between one Church and another, but if controversy be once bred it must be ended. The feast of Easter being, therefore, litigious in the days of Constantine, who honoured of all other Churches most the Church of Rome, which Church was the mother from whose breasts he had drawn that food which gave him nourishment to eternal life; since agreement was necessary, and yet impossible, unless the one part were yielded unto, his desire was that of the two the Eastern Church should rather yield. And to this end he useth sundry persuasive speeches. When Stephen, the Bishop of Rome, going about to show what the Catholic Church should do, had alleged what the heretics themselves did, namely, that they received such as came unto them, and offered not to baptize them anew, St. Cyprian being of a contrary mind to him about the matter at that time in question, which was, "Whether heretics converted ought to be rebaptized yea or no," answering the allegation of Pope Stephen with exceeding great stomach, saying, "To this degree of wretchedness the Church of God and Spouse of Christ is now come, that her ways she frameth to the example of heretics; that to celebrate the sacraments which heavenly instruction hath delivered, light itself doth borrow from darkness, and Christians do that which Antichrists do." Now albeit Constantine have done that to further a better cause, which Cyprian did to countenance a worse, namely, the rebaptization of heretics, and have taken advantage at the odiousness of the Jews, as Cyprian

of heretics, because the Eastern Church kept their feast of Easter always the fourteenth day of the month as the Jews did, what day of the week soever it fell; or howsoever Constantine did take occasion in the handling of that cause to say, "It is unworthy to have anything common with that spiteful nation of the Jews"; shall every motive argument used in such kind of conferences be made a rule for others still to conclude the like by, concerning all things of like nature, when as probable inducements may lead them to the contrary? Let both this and other allegations suitable unto it cease to bark any longer idly against that truth, the course and passage whereof it is not in them to hinder.

12. But the weightiest exception, and of all the most worthy to be respected, is against such kind of ceremonies as have been so grossly and shamefully abused in the Church of Rome, that where they remain they are scandalous, yea, they cannot choose but be stumbling-blocks and grievous causes of offence. Concerning this point, therefore, we are first to note what properly it is to be scandalous or offensive; secondly, what kind of ceremonies are such; and thirdly, when they are necessarily for remedy thereof to be taken away, and when not. The common conceit of the vulgar sort is, whensoever they see anything which they dislike and are angry at, to think that every such thing is scandalous, and that themselves in this case are the men concerning whom our Saviour spake in so fearful manner, saying, "Whosoever shall scandalize or offend any one of these little ones which believe in Me [that is, as they construe it, whosoever shall anger the meanest and simplest artisan which carrieth a good mind, by not removing out of the Church such rites and ceremonies as displease him] better he were drowned in the bottom of the sea." But hard were the case of the Church of Christ if this were to scandalize. Men are scandalized when they are moved, led, and provoked into sin. At good things evil men may take occasion to do evil; and so Christ himself was a rock of offence in Israel, they taking occasion at His poor estate, and at the ignominy of His cross, to think Him unworthy the name of that great and glorious Messiah, whom the Prophets describe in such ample and stately terms. But that which we, therefore, term offensive, because it inviteth men to offend, *and by a dumb kind of provocation encourageth, moveth, or any way leadeth unto sin*, must of necessity be acknowledged actively scandalous. Now some things are so even

by their very essence and nature, so that wheresoever they be found, they are not, neither can be without this force of provocation unto evil; of which kind all examples of sin and wickedness are. Thus David was scandalous in that bloody act, whereby he caused the enemies of God to be blasphemous: thus the whole estate of Israel scandalous, when their public disorders caused the name of God to be ill-spoken of amongst the nations. It is of this kind that Tertullian meaneth: "Offence or scandal, if I be not deceived," saith he, "is when the example not of a good but of an evil thing doth set men forward unto sin. Good things can scandalize none save only evil minds;" good things have no scandalizing nature in them. Yet that which is of its own nature either good or at least not evil may by some accident become scandalous at certain times, and in certain places, and to certain men, the open use thereof nevertheless being otherwise without danger. The very nature of some rites and ceremonies, therefore, is scandalous, as it was in a number of those which the Manichees did use, and is in all such as the law of God doth forbid. Some are offensive only through the agreement of men to use them unto evil, and not else; as the most of those things indifferent which the heathens did to the service of their false gods; which another in heart condemning their idolatry could not do with them in show and token of approbation without being guilty of scandal given. Ceremonies of this kind are either devised at the first unto evil, as the Eunomian heretics in dishonour of the blessed Trinity brought in the laying on of water but once to cross the custom of the Church, which in baptism did it thrice, or else having had a profitable use, they are afterwards interpreted and wrested to the contrary, as those heretics which held the Trinity to be three distinct, not persons, but natures, abused the ceremony of three times laying on water in baptism unto the strengthening of their heresy. The element of water is in baptism necessary; once to lay it on or twice is indifferent. For which cause, Gregory, making mention thereof, saith, "To dive an infant either thrice or but once in baptism can be no way a thing reprobable seeing that both in three times washing, the Trinity of persons, and in one, the unity of Godhead, may be signified." So that of these two ceremonies, neither being hurtful in itself, both may serve unto good purpose, yet one was devised and the other converted unto evil. Now

whereas in the Church of Rome certain ceremonies are said to have been shamefully abused unto evil, as the ceremony of crossing at baptism, of kneeling at the Eucharist, of using wafer cakes, and such like, the question is, whether for remedy of that evil wherein such ceremonies have been scandalous, and perhaps may be still unto some even amongst ourselves, whom the presence and sight of them may confirm in that former error whereto they served in times past, they are of necessity to be removed. Are these or any other ceremonies we have common with the Church of Rome scandalous and wicked in their very nature? This no man objecteth. Are any such as have been polluted from their very birth, and instituted even at the first unto that thing which is evil? That which hath been ordained impiously at the first may wear out that impiety in tract of time, and then what doth let but that the use thereof may stand without offence? The names of our months and of our days, we are not ignorant from whence they came, and with what dishonour unto God they are said to have been devised at the first. What could be spoken against anything more effectual to stir hatred than that which sometime the ancient Fathers in this case speak? Yet those very names are at this day in use throughout Christendom without hurt or scandal to any. Clear and manifest it is that things devised by heretics, yea, devised of a very heretical purpose even against religion, and at their first devising worthy to have been withstood, may in time grow meet to be kept, as that custom the inventors whereof were the Eunomian heretics. So that customs once established and confirmed by long use, being presently without harm, are not in regard of their corrupt original to be held scandalous. But concerning those our ceremonies which they reckon for most Popish, they are not able to avouch that any of them was otherwise instituted than unto good; yea, so used at the first. It followeth, then, that they are all such as having served to good purpose, were afterward converted unto the contrary. And since it is not so much as objected against us that we retain together with them the evil wherewith they have been infected in the Church of Rome, I would demand who they are whom we scandalize by using harmless things unto that good end for which they were first instituted. Amongst ourselves that agree in the approbation of this kind of good use, no man will say that one of us is offensive and scan-

dalous unto another. As for the favourers of the Church of Rome, they know how far we herein differ and dissent from them, which thing neither we conceal, and they by their public writings also profess daily how much it grieveth them ; so that of them there will not many rise up against us as witnesses unto the indictment of scandal, whereby we might be condemned and cast as having strengthened them in that evil wherewith they pollute themselves in the use of the same ceremonies. And concerning such as withstand the Church of England herein, and hate it because it doth not sufficiently seem to hate Rome, they, I hope, are far enough from being by this mean drawn to any kind of Popish error. The multitude, therefore, of them unto whom we are scandalous through the use of abused ceremonies, is not so apparent that it can justly be said in general of any one sort of men or other, we cause them to offend. If it be so that now or then some few are espied who, having been accustomed heretofore to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Rome, are not so scourged of their former rust as to forsake their ancient persuasion which they have had, howsoever they frame themselves to outward obedience of laws and orders ; because such may misconstrue the meaning of our ceremonies, and so take them as though they were in every sort the same they have been ; shall this be thought a reason sufficient whereon to conclude that some law must necessarily be made to abolish all such ceremonies ? They answer that there is no law of God which doth bind us to retain them. And St. Paul's rule is, that in those things from which without hurt we may lawfully abstain, we should frame the usage of our liberty with regard to the weakness and imbecility of our brethren. Wherefore unto them which stood upon their own defence, saying, "All things are lawful unto me," he replieth, "But all things are not expedient in regard of others." All things are clean, all meats are lawful ; but evil unto that man that eateth offensively. If for thy meat's sake thy brother be grieved, thou walkest no longer according to charity. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. Dissolve not for food's sake the work of God. We that are strong must bear the imbecilities of the impotent, and not please ourselves. It was a weakness in the Christian Jews, and a maim of judgment in them, that they thought the Gentiles polluted by the eating of those meats which themselves were afraid to touch for fear

of transgressing the law of Moses ; yea, hereat their hearts did so much rise that the Apostle had just cause to fear lest they would rather forsake Christianity than endure any fellowship with such as made no conscience of that which was unto them abominable. And for this cause mention is made of destroying the weak by meats, and of dissolving the work of God, which was His Church, a part of the living stones whereof were believing Jews. Now those weak brethren before mentioned are said to be as the Jews were, and our ceremonies which have been abused in the Church of Rome to be as the scandalous meats from which the Gentiles are exhorted to abstain in the presence of Jews for fear of averting them from Christian faith, therefore, as charity did bind them to refrain from that for their brethren's sake which otherwise was lawful enough for them, so it bindeth us for our brethren's sake likewise to abolish such ceremonies, although we might lawfully else retain them. But between these two cases there are great odds ; for neither are our weak brethren as the Jews, nor the ceremonies which we use as the meats which the Gentiles used. The Jews were known to be generally weak in that respect ; whereas contrariwise, the imbecility of ours is not common unto so many, that we can take any such certain notice of them. It is a chance if here and there some one be found ; and therefore, seeing we may presume men commonly otherwise, there is no necessity that our practice should frame itself by that which the Apostle doth prescribe to the Gentiles. Again, their use of meats was not like unto our ceremonies ; that being a matter of private action in common life, where every man was free to order that which himself did : but this, a public constitution for the ordering of the Church ; and we are not to look that the Church should change her public laws and ordinances, made according to that which is judged ordinarily and commonly fittest for the whole, although it chance that for some particular men the same be found inconvenient, especially when there may be other remedy also against the sores of particular inconveniences. In this case, therefore, where any private harm doth grow, we are not to reject instruction, as being an unmeet plaster to apply unto it ; neither can we say that he which appointeth teachers for *physicians in this kind of evil*, is as if a man "would set *one to watch a child all day long, lest he should hurt himself with a knife* ; whereas, by taking away the knife

from him, the danger is avoided, and the service of the man better employed." For a knife may be taken away from a child, without depriving them of the benefit thereof, which have years and discretion to use it. But the ceremonies which children do abuse, if we remove quite and clean, as it is by some required that we should, then are they not taken from children only, but from others also; which is as though, because children may perhaps hurt themselves with knives, we should conclude, that therefore the use of knives is to be taken quite and clean even from men also. Those particular ceremonies which they pretend to be so scandalous, we shall in the next book have occasion more thoroughly to sift, where other things also traduced in the public duties of the Church whereunto each of these appertaineth, are together with these to be touched, and such reasons to be examined as have at any time been brought either against the one or the other. In the meanwhile against the convenience of curing such evils by instruction, strange it is that they should object the multitude of other necessary matters, wherein preachers may better bestow their time, than in giving men warning not to abuse ceremonies; a wonder it is that they should object this, which have so many years together troubled the Church with quarrels concerning these things, and are even to this very hour so earnest in them, that if they write or speak publicly but five words, one of them is lightly about the dangerous estate of the Church of England in respect of abused ceremonies. How much happier had it been for this whole Church, if they which have raised contention therein about the abuse of rites and ceremonies, had considered in due time that there is indeed store of matters fitter and better a great deal for teachers to spend time and labour in? It is through their importunate and vehement asseverations, more than through any such experience which we have had of our own, that we are enforced to think it possible for one or other now and then, at leastwise in the prime of the reformation of our Church, to have stumbled at some kind of ceremonies. Wherein, forasmuch as we are contented to take this upon their credit, and to think it may be; since also they further pretend the same to be so dangerous a snare to their souls, that are at any time taken therein, they must give our teachers leave for the saving of those souls (be they never so few) to intermingle sometime *with other more necessary things, admonition concerning*

these not unnecessary. Wherein they should in reason more easily yield this leave, considering that hereunto we shall not need to use the hundredth part of that time, which themselves think very needful to bestow in making most bitter invectives against the ceremonies of the Church.

13. But to come to the last point of all, the Church of England is grievously charged with forgetfulness of her duty, which duty had been to frame herself unto the pattern of their example, that went before her in the work of reformation. For "as the Churches of Christ ought to be most unlike the Synagogue of Antichrist in their indifferent ceremonies; so they ought to be most like one unto another, and for preservation of unity to have as much as possible, maybe all the same ceremonies. And therefore St. Paul to establish this order in the Church of Corinth, that they should make their gatherings for the poor upon the first day of the Sabbath (which is our Sunday) allegeth this for a reason, that he had so ordained in other Churches." Again, "as children of one father and servants of one family, so all Churches should not only have one diet in that they have one word, but also wear as it were one livery in using the same ceremonies." Thirdly, "this rule did the great Council of Nice follow, when it ordained, that where certain at the feast of Pentecost did prey kneeling, they should pray standing; the reason whereof is added, which is, that one custom ought to be kept throughout all Churches. It is true that the diversity of ceremonies ought not to cause the Churches to dissent one with another; but yet it maketh most to the avoiding of dissension, that there be amongst them an unity, not only in doctrine, but also in ceremonies. And, therefore, our form of service is to be amended, not only for that it cometh too near that of the Papists, but also because it is so different from that of the reformed Churches." Being asked to what Churches ours should conform itself, and why other reformed Churches should not as well frame themselves to ours; their answer is, "That if there be any ceremonies which we have better than others, they ought to frame themselves to us: if they have better than we, then we ought to frame ourselves to them: if the ceremonies be alike commodious, the later Churches should conform themselves to the first, as the younger daughter to the elder. For as St. Paul in the members, where all other things are equal, noteth it for a mark of honour above the rest, that one is called before another to the Gospel: so is it for the same cause amongst

the Churches. And in this respect he pincheth the Corinthians, that not being the first which received the Gospel, yet they would have their several manners from other Churches. Moreover, where the ceremonies are alike commodious, the fewer ought to conform themselves unto the more. Forasmuch, therefore, as all the Churches" (so far as they know which plead after this manner) "of our confession in doctrine, agree in the abrogation of divers things which we retain: our Church ought either to show that they have done evil, or else she is found to be in fault that doth not conform herself in that, which she cannot deny to be well abrogated." In this axiom that preservation of peace and unity amongst Christian Churches should be by all good means procured, we join most willingly and gladly with them. Neither deny we but that to the avoiding of dissension it availeth much, that there be amongst them an unity as well in ceremonies as in doctrine. The only doubt is about the manner of their unity, how far Churches are bound to be uniform in their ceremonies, and what way they ought to take for that purpose. Touching the one, the rule which they have set down is: that in ceremonies indifferent all Churches ought to be one of them unto another as like as possibly they may be. Which possibly we cannot otherwise construe, than that it doth require them to be even as like as they may be, without breaking any positive ordinance of God. For the ceremonies whereof we speak, being matter of positive law, they are indifferent, if God have neither Himself commanded nor forbidden them, but left them unto the Church's discretion. So that if as great uniformity be required as is possible in these things, seeing that the law of God forbiddeth not any one of them, it followeth that from the greatest unto the least they must be in every Christian Church the same, except mere impossibility of so having it be the hindrance. To us this opinion seemeth over-extreme and violent: we rather incline to think it a just and reasonable cause for any Church, the state whereof is free and independent if in these things it differ from other Churches, only for that it doth not judge it so fit and expedient to be framed therein by the pattern of their example, as to be otherwise framed than they. That of Gregory unto Leander is a charitable speech and peaceable: *In una fide nil officit Ecclesiæ sanctæ consuetudo diversa*, Where the faith of the holy Church is one, a difference in customs of the Church doth no harm. That

of St. Augustine to Cassulanus is somewhat particular, and toucheth what kind of ceremonies they are, wherein one Church may vary from the example of another without hurt : " Let the faith of the whole Church how wide soever it have spread itself, be always one, although the unity of belief be famous for variety of certain ordinances, whereby that which is rightly believed suffereth no kind of let or impediment." Calvin goeth further, " As concerning rites in particular let the sentence of Augustine take place, which leaveth it free unto all Churches to receive their own custom. Yea, sometime it profiteth and is expedient that there be difference, lest men should think that religion is tied to outward ceremonies. Always provided that there be not any emulation, nor that Churches delighted with novelty affect to have that which others have not." They which grant it true that the diversity of ceremonies in this kind ought not to cause dissension in Churches, must either acknowledge that they grant in effect nothing by these words, or if anything be granted there must as much be yielded unto, as we affirm against their former strict assertion. For if Churches be urged by way of duty to take such ceremonies as they like not of, how can dissension be avoided? Will they say that there ought to be no dissension, because such as are urged ought to like of that whereunto they are urged? If they say this, they say just nothing. For how should any Church like to be urged of duty by such as have no authority or power over it, unto those things which being indifferent it is not of duty bound unto them? Is it their meaning that there ought to be no dissension, because that which Churches are not bound unto no man ought by way of duty to urge upon them; and if any man do he standeth in the sight both of God and men most justly blameable, as a needless disturber of the peace of God's Church and an author of dissension? In saying this they both condemn their own practice, when they press the Church of England with so strict a bond of duty in these things, and they overthrow the ground of their practice, which is, that there ought to be in all kind of ceremonies uniformity, unless impossibility hinder it. For proof whereof it is not enough to allege what St. Paul did about the matter of collections, or what noble men do in the liveries of their servants, or what the *Council of Nice* did for standing in time of prayer on certain days, because though St. Paul did will them of the Church of Corinth every man to lay up somewhat by him upon the

Sunday, and to reserve it in store till himself did come thither to send it unto the Church of Jerusalem for relief of the poor there; signifying withal that he had taken the like order with the Churches of Galatia; yet the reason which he yieldeth of this order taken both in the one place and the other, sheweth the least part of his meaning to have been that, whereunto his words are writhed, "Concerning collection for the saints (he meaneth them of Jerusalem) as I have given order to the Church of Galatia, so likewise do ye," saith the Apostle, "that is, in every first of the week let each of you lay aside by himself, and reserve according to that which God hath blessed him with, that when I come collections be not then to nake, and that when I am come whom you shall choose, them I may forthwith send away by letters to carry your beneficence unto Jerusalem." Out of which words to conclude the duty of uniformity throughout all Churches in all manner of indifferent ceremonies will be very hard, and therefore best to give it over. But, perhaps, they are by so much the more loth to forsake this argument, for that it hath, though nothing else, yet the name of Scripture to give it some kind of countenance more than the next of livery coats affordeth them. For neither is it any man's duty to clothe all his children or all his servants with one weed, nor theirs to clothe themselves so if it were left to their own judgments, as these ceremonies are left of God to the judgment of the Church. And seeing Churches are rather in this case like divers families than like divers servants of one family, because every Church, the state whereof is independent upon any other, hath authority to appoint orders for itself in things indifferent; therefore of the two we may rather infer that as one family is not abridged of liberty to be clothed in friars' grey, for that another doth wear clay-colour; so neither are all Churches bound to the selfsame indifferent ceremonies which it liketh sundry to use. As for that canon in the Council of Nice, let them but read it and weigh it well. The ancient use of the Church throughout all Christendom was, for fifty days after Easter (which fifty days were called Pentecost, though most commonly the last day of them which is Whitsunday be so called), in like sort on all the Sundays throughout the whole year their manner was to stand at prayer, whereupon their meetings unto that purpose on those days had the name of *Stations* given them. Of which custom Tertullian speaketh in this wise: "It is not with us thought fit either to fast on

the Lord's day, or to pray kneeling. The same immunity from fasting and kneeling we keep all the time which is between the feasts of Easter and Pentecost." This being, therefore, an order generally received in the Church; when some began to be singular and different from all others, and that in a ceremony which was then judged very convenient for the whole Church even by the whole, those few excepted which break out of the common pale: the Council of Nice thought good to enclose them again with the rest, by a law made in this sort: "Because there are certain which will needs kneel at the time of prayer on the Lord's day, and in the fifty days after Easter, the holy Synod judging it meet that a convenient custom be observed throughout all Churches, hath decreed, that standing we make our prayers to the Lord." Whereby it plainly appeareth, that in things indifferent, what the whole Church doth think convenient for the whole, the same if any part do wilfully violate, it may be reformed and enrailed again by that general authority whereunto each particular is subject, and that the spirit of singularity in a few ought to give place unto public judgment; this doth clearly enough appear: but not that all Christian Churches are bound in every indifferent ceremony to be uniform; because where the whole hath not tied the parts unto one and the same thing, they being therein left each to their own choice, may either do, as other do or else otherwise, without any breach of duty at all. Concerning those indifferent things, wherein it hath been heretofore thought good that all Christian Churches should be uniform, the way which they now conceive to bring this to pass was then never thought on. For till now it hath been judged, that seeing the law of God doth not prescribe all particular ceremonies which the Church of Christ may use, and in so great variety of them as may be found out, it is not possible that the law of Nature and reason should direct all Churches unto the same things, each deliberating by itself what is most convenient: the way to establish the same things indifferent throughout them all, must needs be the judgment of some judicial authority drawn into one only sentence, which may be a rule for every particular to follow. And because such authority over all Churches is too much to be granted unto any one mortal man, there yet remaineth that which hath been always followed as the best, the safest, the most sincere and reasonable way, namely, the verdict of the whole Church

orderly taken, and set down in the assembly of some general council. But to maintain that all Christian Churches ought for unity's sake to be uniform in all ceremonies, and then to teach that the way of bringing this to pass must be by mutual imitation, so that where we have better ceremonies than others, they shall be bound to follow us, and we them where theirs are better : how should we think it agreeable and consonant unto reason ? For since in things of this nature there is such variety of particular inducements, whereby one Church may be led to think that better, which another Church led by other inducements judgeth to be worse : (For example, the East Church did think it better to keep Easter Day after the manner of the Jews, the West Church better to do otherwise ; the Greek Church judgeth it worse to use unleavened bread in the Eucharist, the Latin Church leavened : one Church esteemeth it not so good to receive the Eucharist sitting as standing, another Church not so good standing as sitting ; there being on the one side probable motives as well as on the other) : unless they add somewhat else to define more certainly what ceremonies shall stand for best, in such sort that all Churches in the world shall know them to be the best, and so know them that there may not remain any question about this point, we are not a whit the nearer for that they have hitherto said. They themselves although resolved in their own judgments what ceremonies are best, the foreseeing that such as they are addicted unto, be not all so clearly and so incomparably best, but others there are or may be at leastwise when all things are well considered as good, knew not which way smoothly to rid their hands of this matter, without providing some more certain rule to be followed for establishment of uniformity in ceremonies, when there are divers kinds of equal goodness ; and, therefore, in this case they say that the later Churches and the fewer should conform themselves unto the elder and the more. Hereupon they conclude, that forasmuch as all the reformed Churches (so far as they know) which are of our confession in doctrine, have agreed already in the abrogation of divers things which we retain : our Church ought either to show that they have done evil, or else she is found to be in fault for not conforming herself to those Churches, in that which she cannot deny to be *in them well* abrogated. For the authority of the *first Churches* (and those they account to be the first in this

cause which were first reformed), they bring the comparison of younger daughters conforming themselves in attire to the example of their elder sisters ; wherein there is just as much strength of reason as in the livery coats before mentioned. St. Paul, they say, noteth it for a mark of special honour, that Epænetus was the first man in all Achaia which did embrace the Christian faith ; after the same sort he toucheth it also as a special pre-eminence of Junias and Andronicus, that in Christianity they were his ancients ; the Corinthians he pincheth with this demand, " Hath the word of God gone out from you, or hath it lighted on you alone ? " But what of all this ? If any man should think that alacrity and forwardness in good things doth add nothing unto men's commendation ; the two former speeches of St. Paul might lead him to reform his judgment. In like sort, to take down the stomach of proud conceited men, that glory as though they were able to set all others to school, there can be nothing more fit than some such words as the Apostle's third sentence doth contain ; wherein he teacheth the Church of Corinth to know that there was no such great odds between them and the rest of their brethren, that they should think themselves to be gold, and the rest to be but copper. He therefore useth speech unto them to this effect : " Men instructed in the knowledge of Jesus Christ there both were before you, and are besides you in the world ; ye neither are the fountain from which first, nor yet the river into which alone the word hath flowed." But although as Epænetus was the first man in all Achaia, so Corinth had been the first Church in the whole world that received Christ : the Apostle doth not show that in any kind of things indifferent whatsoever this should have made their example a law unto all others. Indeed, the example of sundry Churches for approbation of one thing doth sway much ; but yet still as having the force of an example only, and not of a law. They are effectual to move any Church, unless some greater thing do hinder ; but they bind none, no not though they be many ; saving only when they are the major part of a general assembly, and then their voices being more in number must oversway their judgments who are fewer, *because in such cases the greater half is the whole.* But as they stand out single each of them by itself, their number can purchase them no such authority, that the rest of the Churches being fewer, should be, therefore, bound

to follow them, and to relinquish as good ceremonies as theirs for theirs. Whereas, therefore, it is concluded out of these so weak premises that the retaining of divers things in the Church of England, which other reformed Churches have cast out, must needs argue that we do not well, unless we can show that they have done ill; what needed this wrest to draw out from us an accusation of foreign Churches? It is not proved as yet that if they have done well our duty is to follow them, and to forsake our own course, because it differeth from theirs, although, indeed, it be as well for us every way as theirs for them. And if the proofs alleged for confirmation hereof had been sound, yet seeing they lead no further than only to show that where we can have no better ceremonies theirs must be taken; as they cannot, with modesty, think themselves to have found out absolutely the best which the wit of men may devise, so liking their own somewhat better than other men's, even because they are their own, they must in equity allow us to be like unto them in this affection; which, if they do, they ease us of that uncourteous burden whereby we are charged either to condemn them or else to follow them. They grant we need not follow them if our own ways already be better. And if our own be but equal, the law of common indulgence alloweth us to think them at the least half a thought the better, because they are our own, which we may very well do, and never draw any indictment at all against theirs, but think commendably even of them also.

14. To leave reformed Churches, therefore, and their actions for Him to judge of, in whose sight they are as they are, and our desire is that they may even in His sight be found such as we ought to endeavour by all means that our own may likewise be; somewhat we are enforced to speak by way of simple declaration, concerning the proceedings of the Church of England in these affairs, to the end that men, whose minds are free from these partial constructions, whereby the only name of difference from some other Churches is thought cause sufficient to condemn ours, may the better discern whether that we have done be reasonable, yea or no. The Church of England being to alter her received laws concerning such orders, rites, and ceremonies as had been in former times an hindrance unto piety and religious service of God, was to enter into consideration first, that the change of laws, especially concerning matter of religion, must be warily proceeded in. Laws, as all other things human, are

many times full of imperfection, and that which is supposed behoveful unto men, proveth oftentimes most pernicious. The wisdom, which is learned by tract of time, findeth the laws that have been in former ages established, needful in later to be abrogated. Besides, that which sometime is expedient, doth not always so continue; and the number of needless laws unabolished doth weaken the force of them that are necessary. But, true withal it is, that alteration, though it be from worse to better, hath in it inconveniences, and those weighty, unless it be in such laws as have been made upon special occasions, which occasions ceasing, laws of that kind do abrogate themselves. But when we abrogate a law as being ill made, the whole cause for which it was made still remaining, do we not herein revoke our very own deed, and upbraid ourselves with folly; yea, all that were makers of it with oversight and with error? Further, if it be a law which the custom and continual practice of many ages or years hath confirmed in the minds of men to alter, it must needs be troublesome and scandalous. It amazeth them, it causeth them to stand in doubt, whether anything be in itself by nature either good or evil, and not all things rather such as men at this or that time agree to account of them, when they behold even those things disproved, disannulled, rejected, which use had made in a manner natural. What have we to induce men unto the willing obedience and observation of laws but the weight of so many men's judgment as have with deliberate advice assented thereunto, the weight of that long experience which the world hath had thereof with consent and good liking? So that to change any such law must needs with the common sort impair and weaken the force of those grounds whereby all laws are made effectual. Notwithstanding, we do not deny alteration of laws to be sometimes a thing necessary; as when they are unnatural, or impious, or otherwise hurtful unto the public community of men, and against that good for which human societies were instituted. When the apostles of our Lord and Saviour were ordained to alter the laws of heathenish religion received throughout the whole world, chosen I grant they were (Paul excepted), the rest ignorant, poor, simple, unschooled altogether and *unlettered men*; howbeit extraordinarily endued with ghostly wisdom from above before they ever undertook this enterprise, yea their authority confirmed by miracle, to the end it might plainly appear that they were the Lord's ambas-

sadors, unto whose sovereign power for all flesh to stoop, for all the kingdoms of the earth to yield themselves willingly conformable in whatsoever should be required, it was their duty. In this case, therefore, their oppositions in maintenance of public superstition against apostolic endeavours, as that they might not condemn the ways of their ancient predecessors, that they must keep *religiones traditas*, the rites which from age to age had descended, that the ceremonies of religion had been ever accounted by so much holier as elder, these and the like allegations in this case were vain and frivolous. Not to stay longer, therefore, in speech concerning this point, we will conclude that, as the change of such laws as have been specified is necessary, so the evidence that they are such must be great. If we have neither voice from heaven that so pronounceth of them, neither sentence of men grounded upon such manifest and clear proof, that they, in whose hands it is to alter them, may likewise infallibly, even in heart and conscience, judge them so, upon necessity to urge alteration is to trouble and disturb without necessity. As for arbitrary alterations, when laws in themselves, not simply bad or unmeet, are changed for better and more expedient, if the benefit of that which is newly better devised, be but small, since the custom of easiness to alter and change is so evil, no doubt but to bear a tolerable sore is better than to venture on a dangerous remedy; which, being generally thought upon as a matter that toucheth nearly their whole enterprise, whereas change was notwithstanding concluded necessary, in regard of the great hurt which the Church did receive by a number of things then in use, whereupon a great deal of that which had been was now to be taken away and removed out of the Church; yet since there are divers ways of abrogating things established, they saw it best to cut off presently such things as might in that sort be extinguished without danger, leaving the rest to be abolished by disusage through tract of time. And as this was done for the manner of abrogation: so touching the stint or measure thereof, rites and ceremonies, and other external things of like nature being hurtful unto the Church, either in respect of their quality or in regard of their number; in the former there could be no doubt or difficulty what should be done, their deliberation in the latter was more hard. And therefore inasmuch as they did resolve to remove only such things of that kind as the Church might best spare, retaining the residue; their whole counsel is in this point

utterly condemned as having either proceeded from the blindness of those times, or from negligence, or from desire of honour and glory, or from an erroneous opinion that such things might be tolerated for a while, or if it did proceed (as they which would seem most favourable are content to think it possible) from a purpose partly the easier to draw Papists unto the Gospel, by keeping so many orders still the same with theirs, and partly to redeem peace thereby, the breach whereof they might fear would ensue upon more thorough alteration, or howsoever it came to pass, the thing they did is judged evil. But such is the lot of all that deal in public affairs, whether of Church or commonwealth, that which men list to surmise of their doings be it good or ill, they must beforehand patiently arm their minds to endure. Wherefore to let go private surmises, whereby the thing in itself is not made either better or worse, if just and allowable reasons might lead them to do as they did, then are all these censures frustrate. Touching ceremonies harmless therefore in themselves, and hurtful only in respect of number, was it amiss to decree that those things which were least needful and newliest come should be the first that were taken away, as in the abrogating of a number of saints' days, and of other the like customs it appeareth they did till afterwards the form of common prayer being perfected Articles of sound religion and discipline agreed upon, catechisms framed for the needful instruction of youth, Churches purged of things that indeed were burdensome to the people, or to the simple offensive and scandalous, all was brought at the length unto that wherein now we stand? Or was it amiss that having this way eased the Church as they thought of superfluity, they went not on till they had plucked up even those things also which had taken a great deal stronger and deeper root; those things which to abrogate without constraint of manifest harm thereby arising had been to alter unnecessarily (in their judgments) the ancient received custom of the whole Church, the universal practice of the people of God, and those very decrees of our fathers which were not only set down by agreement of general councils, but had accordingly been put in use, and so continued in use till that very time present? True it is that *neither councils nor customs, be they never so ancient and so general, can let the Church from taking away that thing which is hurtful to be retained. Where things have been instituted, which being convenient and good at the first, do*

afterwards in process of time wax otherwise, we make no doubt but they may be altered, yea though councils or customs general have received them. And therefore it is but a needless kind of opposition which they make who thus dispute, "If in those things which are not expressed in the Scripture, that is to be observed of the Church, which is the custom of the people of God and decree of our forefathers; then how can these things at any time be varied, which heretofore have been once ordained in such sort?" Whereto we say that things so ordained are to be kept, howbeit not necessarily any longer than till there grow some urgent cause to ordain the contrary. For there is not any positive law of men, whether it be general or particular, received by formal express consent, as in councils; or by secret approbation as in customs it cometh to pass, but the same may be taken away if occasion serve. Even as we all know that many things generally kept heretofore are now in like sort generally unkept and abolished everywhere. Notwithstanding till such things be abolished what exception can there be taken against the judgment of St. Augustine, who saith, that "of things harmless whatsoever there is, which the whole Church doth observe throughout the world, to argue for any man's immunity from observing the same it were a point of most insolent madness." And surely odious it must needs have been for one Christian Church to abolish that which all had received and held for the space of many ages, and that without any detriment unto religion so manifest and so great, as might in the eyes of impartial men appear sufficient to clear them from all blame of rash and inconsiderate proceeding, if in fervour of zeal they had removed such things. Whereas contrariwise so reasonable moderation herein used, hath freed us from being deservedly subject unto that bitter kind of obloquy, whereby as the Church of Rome doth, under the colour of love towards those things which be harmless, maintain extremely most hurtful corruptions; so we peradventure might be upbraided, that under colour of hatred towards those things that are corrupt we are on the other side as extreme, even against most harmless ordinances. And as they are obstinate to retain that which no man of any conscience is able well to defend; so we might be reckoned fierce and violent, to tear away that which if our own mouths did condemn our consciences would storm and repine thereat. The Romans having banished "*Tarquinius the proud,*" and taken a solemn oath that they never would

permit any man more to reign, could not herewith content themselves, or think that tyranny was thoroughly extinguished, till they had driven one of their consuls to depart the city, against whom they found not in the world what to object, saving only that his name was Tarquin, and that the commonwealth could not seem to have recovered perfect freedom, as long as a man of so dangerous a name was left remaining. For the Church of England to have done the like, in casting out Papal tyranny and superstition, to have showed greater willingness of accepting the very ceremonies of the Turk, Christ's professed enemy, than of the most indifferent things which the Church of Rome approveth; to have left not so much as the names which the Church of Rome doth give unto things innocent; to have rejected whatsoever that Church doth make account of, be it never so harmless in itself, and of never so ancient continuance, without any other crime to charge it with, than only that it hath been the hap thereof to be used by the Church of Rome, and not to be commanded in the word of God: this kind of proceeding might happily have pleased some few men who, having begun such a course themselves, must needs be glad to see their example followed by us. But the Almighty, which giveth wisdom and inspireth with right understanding whomsoever it pleaseth Him, He foreseeing that which man's wit had never been able to reach unto, namely, what tragedies the attempt of so extreme alteration would raise in some parts of the Christian world, did for the endless good of His Church (as we cannot choose but interpret it) use the bridle of His provident restraining hand to stay those eager affections in some, and to settle their resolution upon a course more calm and moderate, lest as in other most ample and heretofore most flourishing dominions it hath since fallen out, so likewise if in ours it had come to pass, that the adverse part being enraged, and betaking itself to such practices as men are commonly wont to embrace when they behold things brought to desperate extremities, and no hope left to see any other end than only the utter oppression and clean extinguishment of one side, by this means, Christendom flaming in all parts of greatest importance at once, they all had wanted that comfort of mutual relief whereby they are now for the time *sustained* (and not the least by this our Church which they *so much impeach*) till mutual combustious bloodsheds and *wastes* (because no other inducement will serve) may enforce

them through very faintness, after the experience of so endless miseries, to enter on all sides at the length into some such consultation as may tend to the best re-establishment of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. To the singular good whereof it cannot but serve as a profitable direction to teach men what is most likely to prove available when they shall quietly consider the trial that hath been thus long had of both kinds of reformation, as well this moderate kind which the Church of England hath taken, as that other more extreme and rigorous which certain Churches elsewhere have better liked. In the meanwhile it may be that suspensè of judgment and exercise of charity were safer and seemlier for Christian men, than the hot pursuit of these controversies, wherein they that are more fervent to dispute, be not always the most able to determine. But who are on His side and who against Him, our Lord in His good time shall reveal. And since thus far we have proceeded in opening the things that have been done, let not the principal doers themselves be forgotten. When the ruins of the house of God (that house which consisting of religious souls is most immediately the precious temple of the Holy Ghost) were become not in His sight alone, but in the eyes of the whole world so exceeding great, that very superstition began even to feel itself too far grown : the first that with us made way to repair the decays thereof by beheading superstition was King Henry the Eighth. The son and successor of which famous king, as we know, was Edward the Saint, in whom (for so by the event we may gather) it pleased God righteous and just to let England see what a blessing sin and iniquity would not suffer it to enjoy. Howbeit that which the wise man hath said concerning Enoch (whose days were, though many in respect of ours, yet scarce as three to nine in comparison of theirs with whom he lived), the same to that admirable child most worthily may be applied, "Though he departed this world soon, yet fulfilled he much time." But what ensued? That work, which the one in such sort had begun, and the other so far proceeded in, was in short space so overthrown, as if almost it had never been, till such time as that God, whose property is to show His mercies then greatest when they are nearest to be utterly despaired of, caused in the depth of discomfort and darkness a most glorious star to arise, and on her head settled the crown, whom Himself had kept as a lamb from the slaughter of those bloody times, that the experience of His goodness in her own deliverance might

cause her merciful disposition to take so much the more delight in saving others whom the like necessity should press. What in this behalf hath been done towards nations abroad? The parts of Christendom most afflicted can best testify. That which especially concerneth ourselves in the present matter we treat of is the state of reformed religion, a thing at her coming to the crown even raised as it were by miracle from the dead, a thing which we so little hoped to see, that even they which beheld it done scarcely believed their own senses at the first beholding. Yet being then brought to pass, thus many years it hath continued, standing by no other worldly mean but that one only hand which erected it, that hand which as no kind of imminent danger could cause at the first to withhold itself, so neither have the practices so many, so bloody following since been ever able to make weary. Nor can we say in this case so justly, that Aaron and Hur, the ecclesiastical and civil states, have sustained the hand which did lift itself to heaven for them; as that heaven itself hath by this hand sustained them, no aid or help having thereunto been ministered for performance of the work of reformation, other than such kind of help or aid as the angel in the prophet Zechariah speaketh of, saying: "Neither by an army nor strength, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Which grace and favour of divine assistance having not in one thing or two showed itself, nor for some few days or years appeared, but in such sort so long continued our manifold sins and transgressions striving to the contrary; what can we less thereupon conclude, than that God would at leastwise by tract of time teach the world that the thing which He blesseth, defendeth, keepeth, so strangely, cannot choose but be of Him? Wherefore, if any refuse to believe us, disputing for the verity of religion established, let them believe God himself thus miraculously working for it, and wish life even for ever and ever unto that glorious and sacred instrument whereby He worketh.

262
H784ec
copy 2
+4

100687

AUG 10 1961

AUG 15 '62

SEP 14 '64

15 '64

NOV 14 '64

FEB 14 '65

APR 14 '65

DEC 7 1975

DEC 9 - 1975

JUL 14 '66

Stanford University Library

Stanford, California

JUL 23 1967

In order that others may use this book,
please return it as soon as possible, but
not later than the date due

JAN 25 1978

FEB 17 '68

MAR 30 '68



